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THE GENTLEST ART

E. V. LUCAS

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THE GENTLEST ART

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London Lavender
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A Boswell of Baghdad
'Twixt Eagle and Dove
The Phantom Journal
Loiterer's Harvest
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Fireside and Sunshine
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L.E.C
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THE GENTLEST ART

A Choice of Letters by Entertaining Hands

EDITED BY

E. V. LUCAS

Letters, through whose progress either wit scatters its scintillations, criticism its instruction, knowledge its treasures, or fancy its glow, are not beneath the dignity of the most eminent reputation.

The Swan of Lichfield

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As keys do open chests,
So letters open brests.
James Howell

I quite agree with you as to the horrors of correspondence. Correspondences are like small-clothes before the invention of suspenders; it is impossible to keep them up.
Sydney Smith

Pray do write to me: a few lines soon are better than a three-decker a month hence. *Edward FitzGerald*

THE EDITOR EXPLAINS

DEAR MADAM (OR SIR),—This collection does not attempt to be representative; it does not compete, for example, with Mr. Mumby's two volumes. My aim was merely to bring together enough good letters to fill the book, and then to stop (although, as it happened, when the time came I rejected almost as many as I used). This places me in a strong position when (as you must frequently do) you throw up your hands and exclaim, "Why has he left out This—and That?" Sometimes the fault will lie with the law of copyright; but probably quite as often it will be either because I had not read the letters by This and That, or because I did not care enough for them. Perhaps one day I will try again.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

E. V. LUCAS

P.S.—The sources of all the letters which are copyright are detailed at the end: but here I should like again to thank those owners of copyright who have so kindly allowed me to pick where I would.

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THE GENTLEST ART

I

CHILDREN AND GRANDFATHERS

Marjorie Fleming writes her first letter

MY DEAR ISA,—I now sit down to answer all your kind and beloved letters which you was so good as to write to me. This is the first time I ever wrote a letter in my Life. There are a great many Girls in the Square and they cry just like a pig when we are under the painfull necessity of putting it to Death. Miss Potune a Lady of my acquaintance praises me dreadfully. I repeated something out of Dean Swift, and she said I was fit for the stage, and you may think I was primmed up with majestick Pride, but upon my word I felt myselfe turn a little birsay—birsay is a word which is a word that William composed which is as you may suppose a little enraged. This horrid fat simpliton says that my Aunt is beautifull which is intirely impossible for that is not her nature.

Two Edinburgh Reviewers

The Rev. Sydney Smith threatens his little granddaughter with awful penalties for omitting to stamp his letter properly

OH, you little wretch! your letter cost me fourpence. I will pull all the plums out of your puddings; I will undress your dolls and steal their under petticoats; you shall have no currant-jelly to your rice; I will kiss you till you cannot see out of your eyes; when nobody else whips you, I will do so; I will fill you so full of sugar-plums that they shall run out of your nose and ears; lastly, your frocks shall be so short that they shall not come below your knees. Your loving grandfather,

SYDNEY SMITH

Lord Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* becomes very human

(To a Grandchild)

CRAIGCROOK, *June* 20, 1848

MY SONSY NANCY!—I love you very much, and think very often of your dimples, and your pimples, and your funny little plays, and all your pretty ways; and I send you my blessing, and wish I were kissing, your sweet rosy lips, or your fat finger-tips; and that you were here, so that I could hear you stammering words, from a mouthful of curds; and a great purple tongue (as broad as it's long); and see your round eyes, open wide with surprise, and your wondering look, to find yourself at Craigcrook! To-morrow is Maggie's *birthday*, and we have built up a great bonfire in honour of it; and Maggie Rutherfurd (do you remember her at all?)

is coming out to dance round it; and all the servants are to drink her health, and wish her many happy days with you and Frankie,—and all the mammays and pappys, whether grand or not grand. We are very glad to hear that she and you love each other so well, and are happy in making each other happy; and that you do not forget dear Tarley or Frankie, when they are out of sight, nor Granny either,—or even old Granny pa, who is in most danger of being forgotten, he thinks. We have had showery weather here, but the garden is full of flowers; and Frankie has a new wheel-barrow, and does a great deal of work, and *some mischief* now and then. All the dogs are very well; and Foxey is mine, and Froggy is Tarley's, and Frankie has taken up with great white Neddy,—so that nothing is left for Granny but old barking Jacky and Dover when the carriage comes. The donkey sends his compliments to you, and maintains that you are a cousin of his! or a near relation, at all events. He wishes, too, that you and Maggie would come; for he thinks that you will not be so heavy on his back as Tarley and Maggie Rutherfurd, who now ride him without mercy.

This is Sunday, and Ali is at church—Granny and I taking care of Frankie till she comes back, and he is now hammering very busily at a corner of the carpet, which he says does not lie flat. He is very good, and really too pretty for a boy, though I think his two eyebrows are growing into one,—stretching and meeting each other above his nose! But he has not so many *freckles* as Tarley, who has a very fine crop of them, which she and I encourage as much as we can. I hope you and Maggie will lay in a stock of them, as I think no little girl can be pretty without them in summer. Our pea-hens are suspected of having young families in some

hidden place, for though they pay us short visits now and then, we see them but seldom, and always alone. If you and Maggie were here with your sharp eyes, we think you might find out their secret, and introduce us to a nice new family of young peas. The old papa cock, in the meantime says he knows nothing about them, and does not care a farthing! We envy you your young peas of another kind, for we have none yet, nor any asparagus neither, and hope you will bring some down to us in your lap. Tarley sends her love, and I send mine to you all; though I shall think most of Maggie to-morrow morning, and of you when your birth morning comes. When is that do you know? It is never dark now here, and we might all go to bed without candles. And so bless you ever and ever, my dear dimply pussie.—Your very loving GRANDPA

John Keats is pleased to be an uncle

WINCHESTER, *September* [17], *Friday* [1819]

MY DEAR GEORGE,— . . . I admire the exact admeasurement of my niece in your mother's letter. O! the little span-long elf. I am not the least a judge of the proper weight and size of an infant. Never trouble yourselves about that. She is sure to be a fine woman. Let her have only delicate nails both on hands and feet, and both as small as a May-fly's, who will live you his life on a 3 square inch of oak-leaf; and nails she must have quite different from the market-women here, who plough into butter and make a quarter-pound taste of it.

I intend to write a letter to your wife, and there I may say more on this little plump subject—I hope she's

plump. "Still harping on my daughter!" This Winchester is a place tolerably well suited to me: there is a fine cathedral, a college, a Roman Catholic chapel, a Methodist do., an Independent do.; and there is not one loom or anything like manufacturing beyond bread and butter in the whole city.

There are a number of rich Catholics in the place. It is a respectable, ancient, aristocratic place, and moreover it contains a nunnery. Our set are by no means so hail fellow well met on literary subjects as we were wont to be. Reynolds has turn'd to the law. By the bye, he brought out a little piece at the Lyceum call'd *One, Two, Three, Four: by Advertisement.* It met with complete success. The meaning of this odd title is explained when I tell you the principal actor is a mimic, who takes off four of our best performers in the course of the farce. Our stage is loaded with mimics. I did not see the piece, being out of town the whole time it was in progress. Dilke is entirely swallowed up in his boy. 'Tis really lamentable to what a pitch he carries a sort of parental mania.

I had a letter from him at Shanklin. He went on a word or two about the Isle of Wight, which is a bit of [a] hobby horse of his, but he soon deviated to his boy. "I am sitting," says he, "at the window, expecting my boy from school." I suppose I told you somewhere that he lives in Westminster, and his boy goes to school there, where he gets beaten, and every bruise he has, and I daresay deserves, is very bitter to Dilke. The place I am speaking of puts me in mind of a circumstance which occurred lately at Dilke's. I think it very rich and dramatic and quite illustrative of the little quiet fun that he will enjoy sometimes.

First I must tell you that their house is at the corner

of Great Smith Street, so that some of the windows look into one street, and the back windows into another round the corner.

Dilke had some old people to dinner—I know not who, but there were two old ladies among them. Brown was there—they had known him from a child.

Brown is very pleasant with old women, and on that day it seems behaved himself so winningly that they became hand and glove together, and a little complimentary.

Brown was obliged to depart early. He bid them good-bye and passed into the passage. No sooner was his back turned than the old women began lauding him.

When Brown had reached the street door, and was just going, Dilke threw up the window and call'd: "Brown! Brown! They say you look younger than ever you did." Brown went on, and had just turned the corner into the other street when Dilke appeared at the back window, crying: "Brown! Brown! By God, they say you're handsome!" You see what a many words it requires to give any identity to a thing I could have told you in half a minute. . . .

You have made an uncle of me, you have, and I don't know what to make of myself. I suppose next there'll be a nevey. You say in May last, write directly. I have not received your letter above ten days. The thought of your little girl puts me in mind of a thing I heard Mr. Lamb say. A child in arms was passing by his chair toward its mother, in the nurse's arms. Lamb took hold of the long clothes, saying: "Where, God bless me, where does it leave off?"

If you would prefer a joke or two to anything else, I have two for you, fresh hatched, just ris, as the bakers'

wives say of the rolls. The first I played off on Brown; the second I played on myself. Brown, when he left me, "Keats," says he, "my good fellow" (staggering upon his left heel and fetching an irregular pirouette with his right); "Keats," says he (depressing his left eyebrow and elevating his right one), though by the way at the moment I did not know which was the right one; "Keats," says he (still in the same posture, but furthermore both his hands in his waistcoat pockets and jutting out his stomach), "Keats,—my—go-o-ood fell-o-o-ooh," says he (interlarding his exclamation with certain ventriloquial parentheses),—no, this is all a lie—he was as sober as a judge, when a judge happens to be sober, and said: "Keats, if any letters come for me, do not forward them, but open them and give me the marrow of them in a few words." At the time I wrote my first to him no letter had arrived. I thought I would invent one, and as I had not time to manufacture a long one, I dabbed off a short one, and that was the reason of the joke succeeding beyond my expectations. Brown let his house to a Mr. Benjamin—a Jew. Now, the water which furnishes the house is in a tank, sided with a composition of lime, and the lime impregnates the water unpleasantly.

Taking advantage of this circumstance, I pretended that Mr. Benjamin had written the following short note :—

"Sir,—By drinking your damn'd tank water I have got the gravel.

"What reparation can you make to me and my family?

"Nathan Benjamin"

By a fortunate hit, I hit upon his right—heathen name—his right prenomen. Brown in consequence, it appears, wrote to the surprised Mr. Benjamin the following :—

"SIR,—I cannot offer you any remuneration until your gravel shall have formed itself into a stone—when I will cut you with pleasure. C. BROWN"

This of Brown's Mr. Benjamin has answered, insisting on an explanation of this singular circumstance. B. says: "When I read your letter and his following, I roared; and in came Mr. Snook, who on reading them seemed likely to burst the hoops of his fat sides."

So the joke has told well. . . .

Shirley Brooks congratulates W. P. Frith, R.A., on arriving at the status of a grandfather, and adds counsel

"PUNCH" OFFICE, *November* 21, 1865

FRITH, EVEN GRANDFATHER FRITH,—With my whole soul do I congratulate thee and the Grandmama, and the venerable Aunt Sissy, and all the small uncles and infinitesimal aunts, or emmets. But chiefly I congratulate *thee*, O reverent and reverend, for the opportunity now afforded thee for the mending of thy ways. Henceforth we look for no frivolity from thee, no unseemly gibes and jests to which thou alone addest, "That's good," and echo is silent. Henceforth thou must study to live at peace with all men, as becomes white hairs, and let us hear no more when —— announceth his "last exhibition," that thou didst hope it would begin at three minutes to eight a.m.; and be at Newgate. Truly this is a great chance for thee, O man of palettes, and aërial prospectives, and conscientious work, such as the *Athenæum* loves to indicate with the gesture called "taking a sight."

Learn psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, to

be chanted unto thy Grandchild; and endeavour to obtain some knowledge of geography, etymology, tintacks, and prosody, that thou mayest not be put utterly to shame when the child shall demand information of thee.

Leave off smoking, yet keep a box for thy younger friends who are not Grandfathers.

Scoff not at architects, for where wouldst thou be but for houses? Nay, art not thou the founder of a house?

Look no longer at the ankles of the other sex, save in the way of thy calling, and speak no soft words unto the maidens, saying, "Lo, I adore thee," when thou dost nothing of the kind. Abjure the society of low Bohemians like —— and ——, but cultivate the honest and virtuous, like Brooks, and, in so far as thou mayest, imitate him. Do not eat too much ham at breakfast, for temperance becometh the aged. Read few novels, but let those thou readest be of the best, as, *Broken to Harness*, *The Silver Cord*, *An Artist's Proof*, and *Blount Tempest*. Likewise, begin to dress less jauntily, and wear a high waistcoat like the Right Reverend Bellew, and the Right Reverend Brooks's.

When thou goest to the Academy dinner, avoid, so far as thou canst, the taking too much wine, for what thing is less dignified than a swipey Grandfather?

Cherish these counsels in the apple of thine eye, and in the pineapple of thy rum; and be thankful that at a time of life when other young men may not ungracefully indulge in youthful levity, thou art called to a higher and a graver sphere.

Buy a stick, and practise walking with it, bending thy back, and not perking up elegantly when a comely female passeth by.

Have grave men to thy feasts, notably him who ex-

pecteth the interview with Mrs. Cottle, and to suffer as he never suffered before. So I greet thee, Grandfather, and hope that thou wilt have many grandsons and granddaughters, and wilt ask me to the christening of them all. S. B.

A mother informs the Controller of the London "Guild of Play" of the good it has done to Sarah Ann

DERE AND HONERABLE MAAM,—I make so bold aster arsk if there can be a Guild of Play at every skule this winter, as I gets more work out of our Sarah Ann now she goes to that ther one of yours than ever I did afore. Her head's full of fairies, and sich like truck, but it makes her twice the gal she was, and she was anything but a hangel I kin tell yer, but if yer can turn er inside out like that with an hour a week I wishes as ow all the children could ave it too.—From yours obliging, MRS. DUNN

Thomas Hayley (aged twelve) points out defects in William Cowper's translation of *Homer*

EARTHAM, *March* 4, 1793

HONORED KING OF BARDS,—Since you deign to demand the observations of an humble and unexperienced servant of yours, on a work of one who is so much his superior (as he is ever ready to serve you with all his might) behold what you demand! but let me desire you not to censure me for my unskilful and perhaps (as they will undoubtedly appear to you) ridicu-

lous observations; but be so kind as to receive them as a mark of respectful affection from your obedient servant,

THOMAS HAYLEY

Book.	Line.	
I.	184.	I cannot reconcile myself to these expressions, "Ah, cloth'd with impudence, etc."; and 195, "Shameless wolf"; and 126, "Face of flint."
I.	508.	"Dishonor'd foul," is, in my opinion, an uncleanly expression.
I.	651.	"Reel'd," I think makes it appear as if Olympus was drunk.
I.	749.	"Kindler of the fires in Heaven," I think makes Jupiter appear too much like a lamplighter.
II.	317–319.	These lines are, in my opinion, below the elevated genius of Mr. Cowper.
XVIII.	300–304.	This appears to me to be rather Irish, since in line 300 you say, "No one sat," and in 304, "Polydamas rose."

The Guilty Poet replies

WESTON, *March* 14, 1793

MY DEAR LITTLE CRITIC,—I thank you heartily for your observations, on which I set an higher value, because they have instructed me as much, and have entertained me more, than all the other strictures of our public judges in these matters. Perhaps I am not much more pleased with *shameless wolf, etc.*, than you. But what is to be done, my little man? Coarse

as the expressions are, they are no more than equivalent to those of Homer. The invective of the ancients was never tempered with good manners, as your papa can tell you! and my business, you know, is not to be more polite than my author, but to represent him as closely as I can.

Dishonor'd foul I have wiped away, for the reason you give, which is a very just one, and the present reading is this—

> Who had dared dishonor thus
> The life itself, etc.

Your objection to *kindler of the fires of heaven*, I had the good fortune to anticipate, and expunged the dirty ambiguity some time since, wondering, not a little, that I had ever admitted it.

The fault you find with the two first verses of Nestor's speech, discovers such a degree of just discernment, that but for your papa's assurance to the contrary, I must have suspected *him* as the author of that remark: much as I should have respected it, if it had been so, I value it, I assure you, my little friend, still more as yours. In the new edition the passage will be found thus altered—

> Alas! great sorrow falls on Greece to-day,
> Priam, and Priam's sons, with all in Troy.
> Oh! how will they exult, and in their hearts
> Triumph, once hearing of this broil between
> The prime of Greece, in council, and in arms.

Where the word *reel* suggests to you the idea of a drunken mountain, it performs the service to which I destined it. It is a bold metaphor; but justified by one of the sublimest passages in Scripture, compared with the sublimity of which even that of Homer suffers humiliation.

"Olympus shall be tipsy"

It is God himself who, speaking, I think, by the prophet Isaiah, says—

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."

With equal boldness in the same scripture, the poetry of which was never equalled, mountains are said to skip, to break out into singing, and the fields to clap their hands. I intend, therefore, that my Olympus shall be tipsy.

The accuracy of your last remark, in which you convicted me of a bull, delights me. A fig for all critics but you! The blockheads could not find it. It shall stand thus—

First spake Polydamas——

Homer was more upon his guard than to commit such a blunder, for he says—

"ἦρχ' ἀγορεύειν."

And now, my dear little censor, once more accept my thanks. I only regret that your strictures are so few, being just and sensible as they are.

Tell your papa that he shall hear from me soon; accept mine, and my dear invalid's affectionate remembrances.—Ever yours, W. C.

Thomas Babington Macaulay (aged fourteen) keeps Mrs. Hannah More (aged seventy) informed of what is going on

CLAPHAM, *January* 16, 1815

MY DEAR MADAM,—My mamma was on the point of writing to inform you that a supposed favourable alteration has taken place in Mr. Henry Thornton's

case. His physicians are still sanguine in their expectations; but his friends, who examine his disorder by the rules of common sense, and not by those of medicine, are very weak in their hopes. The warm bath has been prescribed; and it is the wish and prayer of all who know him that so excellent and valuable a character may be preserved to the world.

You will believe, my dear madam, that no one rejoices more than I do at your recovery from the effects of the fatal accident which threatened us. Events like these prove to us the strength of our affection for our friends,—shew the esteem in which great characters are held by the world.

We are eagerly expecting the promised essay, which will indeed be a most important addition to the literary history of the year eighteen hundred and fifteen, ample as that already is. Every eminent writer of poetry, good or bad, has been publishing within the last month, or is to publish shortly. Lord Byron's pen is at work over a poem as yet nameless. Lucien Buonaparte has given the world his *Charlemagne*. Scott has published his *Lord of the Isles*, in six cantos, a beautiful and elegant poem; and Southey his *Roderick, the last of the Goths*. Wordsworth has printed *The Excursion* (a ponderous quarto of five hundred pages), "*being a portion of the intended poem entitled* The Recluse." What the length of this intended poem is to be, as the Grand Vizier said of the Turkish poet, "N'est connu qu'à Dieu et à M. Wordsworth." This forerunner, however, is, to say no more, almost as long as it is dull; not but that there are many striking and beautiful passages interspersed; but who would wade through a poem

> "——where, perhaps, one beauty shines
> In the dry desert of a thousand lines?"

To add to the list, my dear madam, you will soon see a work of mine in print. Do not be frightened! it is only the index to the thirteenth volume of the *Christian Observer*, which I have had the honour of composing. Index-making, though the lowest, is not the most useless round in the ladder of literature; and I pride myself upon being able to say that there are many readers of the *Christian Observer* who could do without Walter Scott's works, but not without those of, my dear Madam, your affectionate friend, THOMAS B. MACAULAY

P.S.—Give my love to your sisters, if you please, and to my Aunt Thatcher, if still with you. My mamma has just now received her letter.

Hannah More informs Zachary Macaulay, Esq., of the mental progress of his son

BARLEY WOOD, *July* 21, 1815 (?)

MY DEAR SIR,—I wanted Tom to write to-day, but as he is likely to be much engaged with a favourite friend, and I shall have no time to-morrow, I scribble a line. This friend is a sensible youth at Woolwich: he is qualifying for the artillery. I overheard a debate between them on the comparative merits of Eugene and Marlborough as generals. The quantity of reading that Tom has poured in, and the quantity of writing he has poured out, is astonishing. It is in vain I have tried to make him subscribe to Sir Henry Savile's notion, that the poets are the best writers next to those who write prose. We have poetry for breakfast, dinner, and supper. He recited *all* "Palestine," while we breakfasted, to our pious friend Mr. Whalley, at my desire, and did it incomparably.

I was pleased with his delicacy in one thing. You know the Italian poets, like the French, too much indulge in the profane habit of attesting the Supreme Being; but, without any hint from me, whenever he comes to the Sacred Name, he reverently passes it over. I sometimes fancy I observe a daily progress in the growth of his mental powers. His fine promise of mind expands more and more, and, what is extraordinary, he has as much accuracy in his expression as spirit and vivacity in his imagination. I like, too, that he takes a lively interest in all passing events, and that the *child* is still preserved; I like to see him boyish as he is studious, and that he is as much amused with making a pat of butter as a poem. Though loquacious, he is very docile, and I don't remember a single instance in which he has persisted in doing anything when he saw we did not approve it. Several men of sense and learning have been struck with the union of gaiety and rationality in his conversation.

It was a pretty trait of him yesterday: being invited to dine abroad, he hesitated and then said, "No; I have so few days that I will give them all to you." And he said to-day at dinner, when speaking of his journey, "I know not whether to think on my journey with most pain or pleasure—with most kindness for my friends, or affection for my parents." Sometimes we converse in ballad-rhymes, sometimes in Johnsonian sesquipedalians; at tea, we condescend to riddles and charades. He rises early, and walks an hour or two before breakfast, generally composing verses. I encourage him to live much in the open air; this, with great exercise on these airy summits, I hope, will invigorate his body; though his frail body is sometimes tired, the spirits are never exhausted. He is, however, not sorry to be sent to bed soon after nine, and seldom stays to our supper.

A new poem is produced less incorrect than its predecessors—it is an excellent satire on radical reform, under the title of "Clodpole and the Quack Doctor." It is really good. I am glad to see that they are thrown by as soon as they have been once read, and he thinks no more of them. He has very quick perceptions of the beautiful and defective in composition. I received your note last night, and Tom his humbling one. I tell him he is incorrigible in the way of tidiness. The other day, talking of what were the symptoms of a gentleman, he said, with some humour, and much *good*-humour, that he had certain infallible marks of one; which were, neatness, love of cleanliness, and delicacy in his person. I know not when I have written so long a scrawl; but I thought you and his good mother would feel an interest in any trifles which related to him. I hope it will please God to prosper his journey, and restore him in safety to you. Let us hear of his arrival.—Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely, H. More

P.S.—To-morrow we go to Bristol.

Lewis Carroll writes to three of his little girl friends

I

Christ Church, Oxford, *March* 8, 1880

MY DEAR ADA—(Isn't that your short name? "Adelaide" is all very well, but you see when one is *dreadfully* busy one hasn't time to write such long words—particularly when it takes one half-hour to remember how to spell it—and even then one has to go and get a dictionary to see if one has spelt it right, and of course the dictionary is in another room, at the top of

a high bookcase—where it has been for months and months—and has got all covered with dust. So one has to get a duster first of all, and nearly choke oneself in dusting it—and when one *has* made out at last which is dictionary and which is dust, *even* then there is the job of remembering which end of the alphabet "A" comes—for one feels pretty certain it isn't in the *middle*—then one has to go and wash one's hands before turning over the leaves—for they've got so thick with dust, one hardly knows them by sight—and, as likely as not, the soap is lost, and the jug is empty, and there's no towel, and one has to spend hours and hours in finding things—and perhaps after all, one has to go off to the shop to buy a new cake of soap. So, with all this bother, I hope you won't mind my writing it short and saying, "My dear Ada"),—You said in your letter you would like a likeness of me: so here it is, and I hope you will like it. I won't forget to call the next time but one I'm in Wallington. —Your very affectionate friend, LEWIS CARROLL

II

[No date]

MY DEAR AGNES,—You lazy thing! What? I'm to divide the kisses, am I? Indeed I won't take the trouble to do anything of the sort! But I'll tell *you* how to do it. First you must take *four* of the kisses, and—and that reminds me of a very curious thing that happened to me at half-past four yesterday. Three visitors came knocking at my door, begging me to let them in. And when I opened the door, who do you think they were? You'll never guess; why, they were three cats! Wasn't it curious? However, they all looked so cross and disagreeable that I took up the first

thing I could lay my hand on (which happened to be the rolling-pin) and knocked them all down as flat as pancakes! "If *you* come knocking at *my* door," I said, "I shall come knocking at your heads." That was fair, wasn't it?—Yours affectionately, LEWIS CARROLL

III

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, *October* 13, 1875

MY DEAR GERTRUDE,—I never give birthday *presents*, but you see I *do* sometimes write a birthday *letter*: so as I've just arrived here, I am writing this to wish you many and many a happy return of your birthday to-morrow. I will drink your health if only I can remember, and if you don't mind—but perhaps you object?

You see, if I were to sit by you at breakfast, and to drink your tea, you wouldn't like that, would you? You would say, "Boo! hoo! Here's Mr. Dodgson drunk all my tea, and I haven't got any left!" So I am very much afraid, next time Sybil looks for you, she'll find you sitting by the sad sea-waves and crying "Boo! hoo! Here's Mr. Dodgson has drunk my health, and I haven't got any left!"

And how it will puzzle Mr. Maund, when he is sent for to see you! "My dear madam, I'm sorry to say your little girl has got no health at all! I never saw such a thing in my life!" "You see she would go and make friends with a strange gentleman, and yesterday he drank her health!" "Well, Mrs. Chataway," he will say, "the only way to cure her is to wait till his next birthday, and then for *her* to drink *his* health."

And then we shall have changed healths. I wonder how you'll like mine! Oh, Gertrude, I wish you would not talk such nonsense! . . . Your loving friend,

LEWIS CARROLL

"That she-Aristotle Mary"

Charles Lamb entertains a poet's son

P.M. *November* 25, 1819

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,—You will think me negligent, but I wanted to see more of Willy, before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium Tantum Vidi*—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart—and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm, so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's bon mots, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a Touch of the Comparative, but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a Political Economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week Toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little *salty*. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question as to the flux and reflux, which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last," which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The Lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard. So impossible it is for Nature in any of her works to come up to the standard of a child's imagination. The whelps (Lionets) he was sorry to find were dead, and on particular inquiry his old friend the Ouran Outang had gone the way of all

flesh also. The grand Tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another—or none. But again, there was a Golden Eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much *arride* and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative, for being at play at Tricktrack (a kind of minor Billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast." Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term, a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation, a something where the two ends, of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent personification into *men*, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that Excellent remark in a certain Preface about Imagination, explaining "like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself." Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come ex traduce. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him. For, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answer'd that he did not know.

It is hard to discern the Oak in the Acorn, or a Temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid, nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly. As in the Tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little

use he could combine 8 with 25—and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a subsardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion, as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside, and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of scull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-manner'd child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him. Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall. Your's and yours' most sincerely,

C. LAMB

Shelley visits Allegra in the convent

(To Mrs. Shelley)

RAVENNA, *August* 15, 1821

I WENT the other day to see Allegra at her convent, and stayed with her about three hours. She is grown tall and slight for her age, and her face is somewhat altered. The traits have become more delicate, and she is much paler, probably from the effect of improper food. She yet retains the beauty of her deep blue eyes and of her mouth, but she has a contemplative seriousness which, mixed with her excessive vivacity, which has not yet deserted her, has a very peculiar effect in a child. She is under very strict discipline, as may be observed

from the immediate obedience she accords to the will of her attendants. This seems contrary to her nature, but I do not think it has been obtained at the expense of much severity. Her hair, scarcely darker than it was, is beautifully profuse, and hangs in large curls on her neck. She was prettily dressed in white muslin, and an apron of black silk, with trousers. Her light and airy figure and her graceful motions were a striking contrast to the other children there. She seemed a thing of a finer and a higher order. At first she was very shy, but after a little caressing, and especially after I had given her a gold chain which I had bought at Ravenna for her, she grew more familiar, and led me all over the garden, and all over the convent, running and skipping so fast that I could hardly keep up with her. She showed me her little bed, and the chair where she sat at dinner, and the carozzina in which she and her favourite companions drew each other along a walk in the garden. I had brought her a basket of sweetmeats, and before eating any of them she gave her companions and each of the nuns a portion. This is not much like the old Allegra. I asked her what I should say from her to her mamma, and she said:

"Che mi manda un bacio e un bel vestituro."

"E come vuoi il vestituro sia fatto?"

"Tutto di seta e d'oro," was her reply.

Her predominant foible seems the love of distinction and vanity, and this is a plant which produces good or evil, according to the gardener's skill. I then asked her what I should say to papa? "Che venga farmi un visitino e che porta seco la *mammina*." Before I went away she made me run all over the convent, like a mad thing. The nuns, who were half in bed, were ordered to hide themselves and on returning Allegra began ringing the

bell which calls the nuns to assemble. The tocsin of the convent sounded, and it required all the efforts of the Prioress to prevent the spouses of God from rendering themselves, dressed or undressed, to the accustomed signal. Nobody scolded her for these *scappature*, so I suppose she is well treated, so far as temper is concerned. Her intellect is not much cultivated. She knows certain *orazioni* by heart, and talks and dreams of Paradiso and all sorts of things, and has a prodigious list of saints, and is always talking of the Bambino. This will do her no harm, but the idea of bringing up so sweet a creature in the midst of such trash till sixteen!

II

THE NEWS BEARERS

Charles Dickens employs the pen of Boswell

(To Wilkie Collins)

LORD WARDEN HOTEL, DOVER
Friday Evening, May 24, 1861

MY DEAR WILKIE,—I am delighted to receive so good an account of last night, and have no doubt that it was a thorough success. Now it is over, I may honestly say that I am glad you were (by your friendship) forced into the Innings, for there is no doubt that it is of immense importance to a public man in our way to have his wits at his tongue's end. Sir (as Dr. Johnson would have said), if it be not irrational in a man to count his feathered bipeds before they are hatched, we will conjointly astonish them next year. *Boswell*: Sir, I hardly understand you. *Johnson*: Sir, you never understand anything. *Boswell* (in a sprightly manner): Perhaps, Sir, I am all the better for it. *Johnson* (savagely): Sir, I do not know but that you are. There is Lord Carlisle (smiling); he never understands anything, and yet the dog's well enough. Then, Sir, there is Forster; he understands

many things, and yet the fellow is fretful. Again, Sir, there is Dickens, with a facile way with him—like Davy, Sir, like Davy—yet I am told that the man is lying at a hedge ale-house by the sea-shore in Kent, as long as they will trust him. *Boswell*: But there are no hedges by the sea in Kent, Sir. *Johnson*: And why not, Sir? *Boswell* (at a loss): I don't know, Sir, unless—— *Johnson* (thundering): Let us have no unlesses, Sir. If your father had never said "unless," he would never have begotten you, Sir. *Boswell* (yielding): Sir, that is very true.

The Dean tells Stella all

October 14, 1710

IS that tobacco at the top of the paper, or what? I do not remember I slobbered. Lord, I dreamed of Stella, etc., so confusedly last night, and that we saw Dean Bolton and Sterne go into a shop; and she bid me call [them] to her, and they proved to be two parsons I knew not; and I walked without till she was shifting, and such stuff, mixed with much melancholy and uneasiness, and things not as they should be, and I know not how: and it is now an ugly gloomy morning.—*At night.* Mr. Addison and I dined with Ned Southwell, and walked in the Park; and at the Coffeehouse I found a letter from the Bishop of Clogher, and a packet from MD. I opened the bishop's letter; but put up MD.'s and visited a lady just come to town, and am now got into bed, and going to open your little letter: and God send I may find MD. well, and happy, and merry, and that they love Presto as they do fires. O, I will not open it yet! yes I will! no I will not! I am going; I cannot stay till I turn over: what shall I do? My fingers itch: and I now have it in my left hand; and now I will open it

this very moment. I have just got it, and am cracking the seal, and cannot imagine what is in it; I fear only some letter from a bishop, and it comes too late: I shall employ nobody's credit but my own. Well, I see though—— Pshaw, it is from Sir Andrew Fountaine: what, another! I fancy that is from Mrs. Barton; she told me she would write to me; but she writes a better hand than this: I wish you would inquire; it must be at Dawson's office at the Castle. I fear this is from Patty Rolt, by the scrawl. Well, I will read MD.'s letter. Ah no; it is from poor Lady Berkeley, to invite me to Berkeley Castle this winter; and now it grieves my heart: she says she hopes my lord is in a fair way of recovery: poor lady. Well, now I go to MD.'s letter: faith, it is all right; I hoped it was wrong. Your letter, N. 3, that I have now received, is dated Sep. 26, and Manley's letter, that I had five days ago, was dated Oct. 3, that is a fortnight's difference: I doubt it has lain in Steele's office, and he forgot. Well, there is an end of that: he is turned out of his place; and you must desire those who send me packets, to enclose them in a paper, directed to Mr. Addison, at St. James' Coffeehouse: not common letters, but packets: the Bishop of Clogher may mention it to the Archbishop when he sees him. As for your letter, it makes me mad: flidikins, I have been the best boy in Christendom, and you come with your two eggs a-penny.—Well: but stay, I will look over my book: adad, I think there was a chasm between my N. 2 and N. 3. Faith, I will not promise to write to you every week; but I will write every night, and when it is full I will send it; that will be once in ten days, and that will be often enough; and if you only begin to take up the way of writing to Presto, only because it is Tuesday, [or Monday bedad, it will grow a task; but write when you have a mind—no, no, no, no, no, no, no,

no,—agad, agad, agad, agad, agad, agad; no poor Stellakins. Slids, I would the horse were in your—chamber. Have I not ordered Parvisol to obey your directions about him? and have not I said in my former letters, that you may pickle him, and boil him if you will? What do you trouble me about your horses for? Have I anything to do with them! Revolutions a hindrance to me in my business; revolutions—to me in my business? if it were not for the revolutions I could do nothing at all; and now I have all hopes possible, though one is certain of nothing; but to-morrow I am to have an answer, and am promised an effectual one. I suppose I have said enough in this and a former letter how I stand with new people; ten times better than ever I did with the old; forty times more caressed. I am to dine to-morrow at Mr. Harley's; and if he continues as he has begun, no man has ever been better treated by another.

What you say about Stella's mother, I have spoken enough to it already. I believe she is not in town, for I have not yet seen her. My lampoon is cried up to the skies; but nobody suspects me for it, except Sir Andrew Fountaine; at least they say nothing of it to me. Did I not tell you of a great man who received me very coldly? that is he, but say nothing; it was only a little revenge: I will remember to bring it over. The Bishop of Clogher has smoked my *Tatler*, about shortening of words, etc. But, God so! etc.

Charles Dickens narrates a dream

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, *September* 1, 1843

MY DEAR FELTON,—If I thought it in the nature of things that you and I could ever agree on paper, touching a certain Chuzzlewitian question where-

upon Forster tells me you have remarks to make, I should immediately walk into the same, tooth and nail. But as I don't, I won't. Contenting myself with the prediction, that one of these years and days, you will write or say to me: "My dear Dickens, you were right, though rough, and did a world of good, though you got most thoroughly hated for it." To which I shall reply: "My dear Felton, I looked a long way off and not immediately under my nose." . . . At which sentiment you will laugh, and I shall laugh; and then (for I foresee this will all happen in my land) we shall call for another pot of porter and two or three dozens of oysters.

Now, don't you in your own heart and soul quarrel with me for this long silence?

Not half so much as I quarrel with myself, I know; but if you could read half the letters I write to you in imagination, you would swear by me for the best of correspondents. The truth is, that when I have done my morning's work, down goes my pen, and from that minute I feel it a positive impossibility to take it up again, until imaginary butchers and bakers wave me to my desk. I walk about brimful of letters, facetious descriptions, touching morsels, and pathetic friendships, but can't for the soul of me uncork myself. The post-office is my rock ahead. My average number of letters that *must* be written every day is, at the least, a dozen. And you could no more know what I was writing to you spiritually, from the perusal of the bodily thirteenth, than you could tell from my hat what was going on in my head, or could read my heart on the surface of my flannel waistcoat.

This is a little fishing place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff, whereon—in the centre of a tiny semi-circular bay—our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. Seven miles out are the Goodwin Sands

(you've heard of the Goodwin Sands?) whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a big lighthouse called the North Foreland on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea. Under the cliff are rare good sands, where all the children assemble every morning and throw up impossible fortifications, which the sea throws down again at high water. Old gentlemen and ancient ladies flirt after their own manner in two reading-rooms and on a great many scattered seats in the open air.

Other old gentlemen look all day through telescopes and never see anything. In a bay-window in a one-pair sits, from nine o'clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neck-cloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen—a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise—splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay-window on the ground floor, eating a strong lunch; after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumour. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles, or so, away), and then I'm told there is a sound in Lincoln's Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine glasses.

I never shall have been so near you since we parted aboard the *George Washington* as next Tuesday. Forster,

Maclise, and I, and perhaps Stanfield, are then going aboard the Cunard steamer at Liverpool, to bid Macready good-bye and bring his wife away. It will be a very hard parting. You will see and know him, of course. We gave him a splendid dinner last Saturday at Richmond, whereat I presided with my accustomed grace. He is one of the noblest fellows in the world, and I would give a great deal that you and I should sit beside each other to see him play Virginius, Lear, or Werner, which I take to be, every way, the greatest piece of exquisite perfection that his lofty art is capable of attaining. His Macbeth, especially the last act, is a tremendous reality; but so indeed is almost everything he does. You recollect, perhaps, that he was the guardian of our children while we were away. I love him dearly.... You asked me, long ago, about Maclise. He is such a wayward fellow in his subjects, that it would be next to impossible to write such an article as you were thinking of about him. I wish you could form an idea of his genius. One of these days a book will come out, *Moore's Irish Melodies*, entirely illustrated by him, on every page. *When* it comes, I'll send it to you. You will have some notion of him then.

He is in great favour with the Queen, and paints secret pictures for her to put upon her husband's table on the morning of his birthday, and the like. But if he has a care, he will leave his mark on more enduring things than palace walls.

And so Longfellow is married. I remember *her* well, and could draw her portrait, in words, to the life. A very beautiful and gentle creature, and a proper love for a poet. My cordial remembrances and congratulations. Do they live in the house where we breakfasted? . . .

I very often dream I am in America again; but,

strange to say, I never dream of you. I am always endeavouring to get home in disguise, and have a dreary sense of distance. *À propos* of dreams, is it not a strange thing if writers of fiction never dream of their own creations; recollecting, I suppose, even in their dreams, that they have no real existence? I never dream of any of my own characters, and I feel it so impossible that I would wager, Scott never did of his, real as they are. I had a good piece of absurdity in my head a night or two ago. I dreamed that somebody was dead. I don't know who, but it's not to the purpose. It was a private gentleman, or a particular friend; and I was greatly overcome when the news was broken to me (very delicately) by a gentleman in a cocked hat, top boots, and a sheet. Nothing else. "Good God!" I said, "is he dead?" "He is as dead, sir," rejoined the gentleman, "as a door-nail. But we must all die, Mr. Dickens, sooner or later, my dear sir." "Ah!" I said, "Yes, to be sure. Very true. But what did he die of?" The gentleman burst into a flood of tears, and said in a voice broken by emotion: "He christened his youngest child, Sir, with a toasting fork." I never in my life was so affected as at his having fallen a victim to this complaint. It carried a conviction to my mind that he never could have recovered. I knew that it was the most interesting and fatal malady in the world; and I wrung the gentleman's hand in a convulsion of respectful admiration, for I felt that this explanation did equal honour to his head and heart.

What do you think of Mrs. Gamp? And how do you like the undertaker? I have a fancy that they are in your way. Oh heaven! such green woods as I was rambling among, down in Yorkshire, when I was getting that done last July! For days and weeks we never saw

the sky but through green boughs; and all day long I cantered over such soft moss and turf, that the horse's feet scarcely made a sound upon it. We have some friends in that part of the country (close to Castle Howard, where Lord Morpeth's father dwells in state, *in* his park indeed), who are the jolliest of the jolly, keeping a big old country house, with an ale-cellar something larger than a reasonable church, and everything, like Goldsmith's bear, dances "in a concatenation accordingly." Just the place for you, Felton!

We performed some madnesses there in the way of forfeits, picnics, rustic games, inspections of ancient monasteries at midnight, when the moon was shining, that would have gone to your heart, and, as Mr. Weller says, "come out on the other side." . . . Write soon, my dear Felton; and if I write to you less often than I would, believe that my affectionate heart is with you always. Love and regards to all friends, from yours ever and ever, very faithfully yours.

Thackeray describes his Parisian adventures to Mrs. Brookfield

I WENT to see my old haunts when I came to Paris 13 years ago, and made believe to be a painter,—just after I was ruined and before I fell in love and took to marriage and writing. It was a very jolly time, I was as poor as Job and sketched away most abominably, but pretty contented; and we used to meet in each other's little rooms and talk about art and smoke pipes and drink bad brandy and water—That awful habit still remains, but where is art, that dear mistress whom I loved, though in a very indolent, capricious manner, but with a real

sincerity? I see her far, very far off. I jilted her, I know it very well; but you see it was Fate ordained *that* marriage should never take place; and forced me to take on with another lady, two other ladies, three other ladies; I mean the three and my wife, etc., etc.

Well, you are very good to listen to all this egotistic prattle, chère Sœur, si douce et si bonne.

I have no reason to be ashamed of my loves, seeing that all three are quite lawful. Did you go to see my people yesterday? Some day when his reverence is away, will you have the children? And not, if you please, be so vain as to fancy that you can't amuse them or that they will be bored in your home. They must and shall be fond of you, if you please. Alfred's open mouth as he looked at the broken bottle and spilt wine must have been a grand picture of agony. I couldn't find the lecture room at the Institute, so I went to the Louvre instead, and took a feast with the statues and pictures. The Venus de Milo is the grandest figure of figures. The wave of the lines of the figure, whenever seen, fills my senses with pleasure. What is it which so charms, satisfies one, in certain lines? O! the man who achieved that statue was a beautiful Genius. I have been sitting thinking of it these 10 minutes in a delighted sensuous rumination. The colours of the Titian pictures comfort one's eyes similarly; and after these feasts, which wouldn't please my lady very much, I daresay, being, I should think, too earthly for you, I went and looked at a picture I usedn't to care much for in old days, an angel saluting a Virgin and Child by Pietro Cortona,—a sweet smiling angel with a lily in her hands, looking so tender and gentle I wished that instant to make a copy of it, and do it beautifully, which I can't, and present it to somebody on Lady-day. There now, just fancy it is

done, and presented in a neat compliment, and hung up in your room—a pretty piece—dainty and devotional?—I drove about with ——, and wondered at her more and more. —She is come to "my dearest William" now: though she doesn't care a fig for me. She told me astonishing things, showed me a letter in which every word was true, and which was a fib from beginning to end;—a Miracle of Deception;—flattered, fondled and coaxed—O! she was worth coming to Paris for!

. . . . . .

Pray God keep us simple. I have never looked at anything in my life which has so amazed me. Why, this is as good almost as if I had you to talk to. Let us go out and have another walk.

Horace Walpole describes Madame du Deffand

(To George Montagu, Esq.)

PARIS, *September* 7, 1769

MY dear old friend [Madame du Deffand] was charmed with your mention of her, and made me vow to return you a thousand compliments. She cannot conceive why you will not step hither—feeling in herself no difference between the spirits of twenty-three and seventy-three, she thinks there is no impediment to doing whatever one will, but the want of eyesight. If she had that I am persuaded no consideration would prevent her making me a visit at Strawberry Hill. She makes songs, sings them, remembers all that ever were made; and, having lived from the most agreeable to the most reasoning age, has all that was amiable in the last, all that is sensible in this, without the vanity of the former, or the pedant impertinence of the latter. I have

heard her dispute with all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, and never knew her in the wrong. She humbles the learned, sets right their disciples, and finds conversation for everybody. Affectionate as Madame de Sévigné, she has none of her prejudices, but a more universal taste; and, with the most delicate frame, her spirits hurry her through a life of fatigue that would kill me, if I was to continue here. If we return by one in the morning from suppers in the country, she proposes driving to the Boulevard, or to the Foire St. Ovide, because it is too early to go to bed. I had great difficulty last night to persuade her, though she was not well, not to sit up till between two and three for the Comet; for which purpose she had appointed an astronomer to bring his telescopes to the President Henault's, as she thought it would amuse me. In short, her goodness to me is so excessive, that I feel unashamed at producing my withered person in a round of diversions, which I have quitted at home. I tell a story: I do feel ashamed, and sigh to be in my quiet castle and cottage; but it costs me many a pang, when I reflect that I shall probably never have resolution enough to take another journey to see this best and sincerest of friends, who loves me as much as my mother did! but it is idle to look forward—what is next year?—a bubble that may burst for her or me, before even the flying year can hurry to the end of its almanack!

To form plans and projects in such a precarious life as this, resembles the enchanted castles of fairy legends, in which every gate was guarded by giants, dragons, etc. Death or diseases bar every portal through which we mean to pass; and, though we may escape them and reach the last chamber, what a wild adventurer is he that centres his hopes at the end of such an avenue! I sit contented with the beggars at the threshold, and never pro-

pose going on, but as the gates open of themselves. The weather here is quite sultry, and I am sorry to say, one can send to the corner of the street and buy better peaches than all *our* expense in kitchen gardens produces. Lord and Lady Dacre are a few doors from me, having started from Tunbridge more suddenly than I did from Strawberry Hill, but on a more unpleasant motive. My lord was persuaded to come and try a new physician. His faith is greater than mine! but, poor man! can one wonder that he is willing to believe? My lady has stood her shock, and I do not doubt will get over it.

Adieu, my t'other dear old friend! I am sorry to say, I see you almost as seldom as I do Madame du Deffand. However it is comfortable to reflect that we have not changed to each other for some five-and-thirty years, and neither you nor I haggle about naming so ancient a term. I made a visit yesterday to the Abbess of Panthemont, General Ogelthorpe's niece, and no chicken. I inquired after her mother, Madame de Mezières, and thought I might, to a spiritual votary to immortality, venture to say that her mother must be very old; she interrupted me tartly, and said, no, her mother had been married extremely young. Do but think of it seeming important to a saint to sink a wrinkle of her own through an iron grate! Oh! we are ridiculous animals; and if angels have any fun in them, how we must divert them.

Charles Lamb sends news to China

January 2, 1810

Mary sends her love.

DEAR MANNING,—When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any

evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the posteriors which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, etc., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent—cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to *Mrs. Leicester*; the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, etc. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life—I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour: and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following

various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb of Stamford;[1] 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much), since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp-set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. Do you know Kate * * * * * * * * *. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (turkey in Europe and turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is New-Year here. That is, it was New-Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. Have you trampled on the Cross

[1] Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

yet? The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the Indian post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate *********. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one, but if ever one star differed from another in glory ——. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the *Friend*, which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

"She's sweet Fifteen,
I'm *one year more.*"

Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which predominated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate

is vanished, but Miss B * * * * * * is always to be met with!

"Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
And courtly Mildred dies, while country Madge survives."

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. Godwin, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paronomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. "Ah! sir," said she, "I have seen better days;" "So have I, good woman," I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Dr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you.

Boz and the Wizard

Charles Dickens chronicles the proceedings of four Eton boys

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, *July* 11, 1851

MY DEAR MRS. WATSON,—I am so desperately indignant with you for writing me that short apology for a note, and pretending to suppose that under any circumstances I could fail to read with interest anything *you* wrote to me, that I have more than half a mind to inflict a regular letter upon you. If I were not the gentlest of men I should do it!

Poor dear Haldimand, I have thought of him so often. That kind of decay is so inexpressibly affecting and piteous to me, that I have no words to express my compassion and sorrow. When I was at Abbotsford, I saw in a vile glass case the last clothes Scott wore. Among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering, hither and thither, of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic description of him when he tried to write, and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken powers and mental weakness from that hour. I fancy Haldimand in such another, going listlessly about that beautiful place, and remembering the happy hours we have passed with him, and his goodness and truth, I think what a dream we live in, until it seems for the moment the saddest dream that ever was dreamed. Pray tell us if you hear more of him. We really loved him.

To go to the opposite side of life, let me tell you that a week or so ago I took Charley and three of his schoolfellows down the river gipsying. I secured the services of Charley's godfather (an old friend of mine, and a noble fellow with boys), and went down to Slough,

accompanied by two immense hampers from Fortnum and Mason, on (I believe) the wettest morning ever seen out of the tropics.

It cleared before we got to Slough; but the boys, who had got up at four (we being due at eleven), had horrible misgivings that we might not come, in consequence of which we saw them looking into the carriages before us, all face. They seemed to have no bodies whatever, but to be all face; their countenances lengthened to that surprising extent. When they saw us the faces shut up as if they were upon strong springs, and their waistcoats developed themselves in the usual places. When the first hamper came out of the luggage-van, I was conscious of their dancing behind the guard; when the second came out with bottles in it, they all stood wildly on one leg. We then got a couple of flys to drive to the boat-house. I put them in the first, but they couldn't sit still a moment, and were perpetually flying up and down like the toy figures in the sham snuff-boxes. In this order we went on to "Tom Brown's, the tailor's," where they all dressed in aquatic costume, and then to the boat-house, where they all cried in shrill chorus for "Mahogany"—a gentleman so called by reason of his sunburnt complexion, a waterman by profession. (He was likewise called during the day "Hog" and "Hogany," and seemed to be unconscious of any proper name whatsoever.) We embarked, the sun shining now, in a galley with a striped awning, which I had ordered for the purpose, and all rowing hard, went down the river. We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggles I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. I feel, even now, old with the anxiety of that tremendous hour. They were very good, however.

The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters' to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered and I suppose outlived the salad he took. I have heard nothing to the contrary, and I imagine I should have been implicated in the inquest if there had been one. We had tea and rashers of bacon at a public-house, and came home, the last five or six miles in a prodigious thunder-storm. This was the great success of the day, which they certainly enjoyed more than anything else. The dinner had been great, and Mahogany had informed them, after a bottle of light champagne, that he never would come up the river "with ginger company" any more. But the getting so completely wet through was the culminating part of the entertainment. You never in your life saw such objects as they were; and their perfect unconsciousness that it was at all advisable to go home and change, or that there was anything to prevent their standing at the station two mortal hours to see me off, was wonderful. As to getting them to their dames with any sort of sense that they were damp, I abandoned the idea. I thought it a success when they went down the street as civilly as if they were just up and newly dressed, though they really looked as if you could have rubbed them to rags with a touch, like saturated curl-paper.

I am sorry you have not been able to see our play, which I suppose you won't now, for I take it you are not going on Monday, the twenty-first, our last night in town? It is worth seeing, not for the getting up (which modesty forbids me to approve), but for the little bijou it is, in the scenery, dresses and appointments.

They are such as never can be got together again, because such men as Stanfield, Roberts, Grieve, Haghe, Egg and others never can be again combined in such

a work. Everything has been done at its best from all sorts of authorities, and it is really very beautiful to look at.

I find I am "used up" by the Exhibition. I don't say "there is nothing in it"—there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it.

I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and perhaps the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when anyone says, "Have you seen ——?" I say "Yes," because if I don't, I know he'll explain it, and I can't bear that. —— took all the school one day. The school was composed of a hundred "infants," who got among the horses' legs in crossing to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came reeling out from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind. They were clinging to horses, I am told, all over the park. When they were collected and added up by the frantic monitors, they were all right. They were then regaled with cake, etc., and went tottering and staring all over the place; the greater part wetting their forefingers and drawing a wavy pattern on every accessible object. One infant strayed. He was not missed. Ninety and nine were taken home, supposed to be the whole collection, but this particular infant went to Hammersmith. He was found by the police at night, going round and round the turnpike, which he still supposed to be a part of the Exhibition. He had the same opinion of the police, also of Hammersmith workhouse, where he passed the night. When his mother came for him in the morning, he asked when it would be over? It was a great Exhibition, he said, but he thought it long.

As I begin to have a foreboding that you will think the same of this act of vengeance of mine, this present letter, I shall make an end of it with my heartiest and most loving remembrances to Watson. I would have liked him of all things to have been in the Eton expedition, tell him, and to have heard a song (by-the-bye, I have forgotten that) sung in the thunder-storm, solos by Charley, chorus by the friends, describing the career of a booby who was plucked at College, every verse ending—

> "I don't care a fig what the people may think,
> But what WILL the governor say!"

which was shouted with a deferential jollity towards myself, as a governor who had that day done a creditable action, and proved himself worthy of all confidence.—Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, most sincerely yours.

The Rev. Sydney Smith tells Mrs. Grote everything

COMBE FLOREY, *December* 20, 1840

I AM improved in lumbago, but still less upright than Aristides. Our house is full of beef, beer, young children, newspapers, libels, and mince-pies, and life goes on very well, except that I am often reminded I am too near the end of it. I have been trying ——'s *Lectures on the French Revolution*, which I could not get on with, and am reading Thiers, which I find it difficult to lay down. —— is long and feeble; and though you are tolerably sure he will be dull, you are not equally sure he will be right. We are covered with snow, but utterly ignorant of what cold is, as are all natural philosophers.

What a remarkable woman she must be, that Mrs. Grote! she uses the word "*thereto*." Why use antiquated forms of expression? Why not wear antiquated caps and shoes? Of all women living, you least want these distinctions.

I join you sincerely in your praise of ——; she is beautiful, she is clear of envy, hatred, and malice, she is very clear of prejudices, she has a regard for me.

It will be a great baronet season,—a year of the Bloody Hand. I know three more baronets I can introduce you to, and four or five knights; but, I take it, the mock-turtle of knights will not go down. I see how it will end: Grote will be made a baronet; and if he is not, I will. The Ministers, who would not make me a bishop, can't refuse to make me a baronet. I remain always your attached friend,

SYDNEY SMITH

Horace Walpole keeps George Montagu informed

ARLINGTON STREET, *December* 16, 1764

AS I have not read in the paper that you died lately at Greatworth, in Northamptonshire, nor have met with any Montagu or Trevor in mourning, I conclude you are living; I send this, however, to inquire, and, if you should happen to be departed, hope your executor will be so kind as to burn it.

Though you do not seem to have the same curiosity about my existence, you may gather from my handwriting that I am still in being; which being perhaps full as much as you want to know of me, I will trouble you with no further particulars about myself—nay, nor about anybody else: your curiosity seeming to be pretty much the same

about all the world. News there are certainly none, nobody is even dead, as the Bishop of Carlisle [Lyttleton] told me to-day, which I repeat to you in general, though I apprehend in his own mind he meant no possessor of a better bishopric.

If you like to know the state of the town, here it is. In the first place, it is very empty; in the next, there are more diversions than the week will hold. A charming Italian opera, with no dances and no company, at least on Tuesdays; to supply which defects the subscribers are to have a ball and supper—a plan that in my humble opinion will [fill] the Tuesdays and empty the Saturdays. At both playhouses are woful English operas, which, however, fill better than the Italian, patriotism being entirely confined to our ears; how long the sages of the law may leave us those I cannot say. Mrs. Cornelis, apprehending the future assembly at Almack's, has enlarged her vast room, and hung it with blue satin, and another with yellow satin; but Almack's room, which is to be ninety feet long, proposes to swallow up both hers, as easily as Moses' rod gobbled down those of the magicians.

Well, but there are more joys; a dinner and assembly every Tuesday at the Austrian Minister's; ditto on Thursdays at the Spaniard's; ditto on Wednesdays and Sundays at the French Ambassador's; besides Madame de Welderen's on Wednesdays, Lady Harrington's Sundays, and occasional private mobs at my Lady Northumberland's. Then for the mornings, there are levees and drawing-rooms without end. Not to mention the Maccaroni Club; which has quite absorbed Arthur's; for you know old fools will hobble after young ones. Of all these pleasures I prescribe myself a very small pittance,—my dark corner in my own box at the Opera,

and now and then an ambassador, to keep my French going till my journey to Paris. Politics are gone to sleep, like a paroli at pharaoh, though there is the finest tract lately published that was ever written, called an "*Inquiry into the Doctrine of Libels.*" It would warm your old Algernon blood; but for what anybody cares, might as well have been written about the wars of York and Lancaster.

The thing most in fashion, is my edition of Lord Herbert's Life; people are mad after it, I believe because only 200 were printed; and, by the numbers that admire it, I am convinced that if I had kept his lordship's counsel, very few would have found out the absurdity of it.

The caution with which I hinted at its extravagance has passed with several for approbation, and drawn in theirs. This is nothing new to me; it is when one laughs out at their idols, that one angers people. I do not wonder now that Sir Philip Sidney was the darling hero, when Lord Herbert, who followed him so close, and trod in his steps, is at this time of day within an ace of rivalling him. I wish I had let him; it was contradicting one of my own maxims, which I hold to be very just; that it is idle to endeavour to cure the world of any folly, unless we could cure it of being foolish.

Tell me whether I am likely to see you before I go to Paris, which will be early in February. I hate you for being so indifferent about me. I live in the world, yet love nothing; care a straw for nothing but two or three old friends that I have loved these 30 years. You have buried yourself with half a dozen parsons and squires, and yet never cast a thought upon those you have always lived with.

E. F-G. takes a New Pen

You come to town for two months, grow tired in six weeks, hurry away, and then one hears no more of you till next winter. I don't want you to like the world; I like it no more than you; but I stay a while in it, because while one sees it one laughs at it, but when one gives it up, one grows angry with it; and I hold it much wiser to laugh than to be out of humour. You cannot imagine how much ill-blood this perseverance has cured me of; I used to say to myself: "Lord! this person is so bad, that person is so bad. I hate them." I have now found out that they are all pretty much alike, and I hate nobody. Having never found you out, but for integrity and sincerity, I am much disposed to persist in a friendship with you; but if I am to be at all the pains of keeping it up, I shall imitate my neighbours (I don't mean those at next door, but in the Scripture sense of neighbour, anybody) and say, "That is a very good man, but I don't care a farthing for him." Till I have taken my final resolution on that head, I am yours most cordially.

Edward FitzGerald reports progress

MARKET HILL, WOODBRIDGE
October 1866

MY DEAR POLLOCK,—(You *shall* have a new Pen), I suppose your Country Rambles are over, and that you are got back to the old Shop. Well then, let me hear of you, do. I can't forget your kindly accosting of me in Holborn in the Spring, when I was after Carpets, etc. Well, I fitted up two rooms in my new House (there are only three) and got it ready for a sick Niece, who was there for two months.

But I have not got into it; but go on here: after living some forty years in lodgings, one is frightened at a Change: yet it would be better to go.

Meanwhile, here I am.

For nearly four months I was living on board my Big Ship. Bed as well as Board. She was only laid up in her Mud a week ago; and here I am returned to mine. Laurence called on me (he was at my Brother's) just before I had bid Adieu to my Seafaring; so I didn't see him.

Please to send me Spedding's new Address; he won't, however, be obliged to you for doing so, I believe; but I must have the Old Villain out of his Cart twice a Year at least.

I want you to send me your "Carte de Visite": you said you would three or four years ago, but you have not done so. Can't you send me a good one of Spedding? He wouldn't, for all I could say to him. I daresay you have several of him: do send me one: and not the worst: and one of yourself, Do. I have written to Blakesley for his; as also to tell him that his *Herodotus* seems to me the very best Edition of a classic that ever came into my hands. I scarce know why it is that I always get back to Greek (and Virgil)—when in my Ship: but so it is. Sophocles has been a sort of Craze to me this Summer.

(*N.B.*—Don't be frightened. No Translation threatened! All that done with for ever.) And *Herodotus* has been delightful. Now, I turn again to Mudie. *Armadale* have you read? Absurd as it is, so near being very good, I only wish it were a dozen Volumes instead of Two. It is time to read again the *Woman in White*: a Masterpiece in its way I do think. I guessed at Annie Thackeray's new Novel in the *Cornhill*; so much of

her Father: so much of Herself: I think she begins to deal rather too much in Reflections; but her Pictures are delightful: her Children the best I ever read.

'Tis now the very witching Time of night, etc. Now could I drink hot—Grog—and so I will. When I was in my Ship I could smoke and drink—Punch, even—but I shall soon have to give up, now I am laid up.

My Paper is in mourning, for my Brother Peter's Wife: a Capital Woman, who died five months ago.

He really loved her, was like a Ship without rudder when he lost her, and has in consequence just married his Housekeeper.

I believe he has done well.

Now do write to me; and send me your Photograph, as also the Monster's.

Robert Louis Stevenson sets down a day's work at Apia

(To Sidney Colvin)

IN THE MOUNTAIN, APIA, SAMOA
Tuesday, November 3, 1890

I BEGIN to see the whole scheme of letter-writing; you sit down every day and pour out an equable stream of twaddle.

This morning all my fears were fled, and all the trouble had fallen to the lot of Peni himself, who deserved it; my field was full of weeders; and I am again able to justify the ways of God. All morning I worked at the

South Seas, and finished the chapter I had stuck upon on Saturday. Fanny, awfully hove-to with rheumatics and injuries received upon the field of sport and glory, chasing pigs, was unable to go up and down stairs, so she sat upon the back verandah, and my work was chequered by her cries. "Paul, you take a spade to do that—dig a hole first. If you do that, you'll cut your foot off! Here, you boy, what do you there? You no get work? You go find Simelé; he give you work. Peni, you tell this boy he go find Simelé; suppose Simelé no give him work, you tell him go 'way. I no want him here. That boy no good."—*Peni* (from the distance in reassuring tones), "All right, sir!"—*Fanny* (after a long pause), "Peni, you tell that boy go find Simelé. I no want him stand here all day. I no pay that boy. I see him all day. He no do nothing." Luncheon, beef, soda-scones, fried bananas, pine-apple in claret, coffee. Try to write a poem; no go. Play the flageolet. Then sneakingly off to farming and pioneering. Four gangs at work on our place; a lively scene; axes crashing and smoke blowing; all the knives are out. But I rob the garden party of one without a stock, and you should see my hand—cut to ribbons. Now I want to do my path up the Vaituliga single-handed, and I want it to burst on the public complete. Hence, with devilish ingenuity, I begin it at different places; so that if you stumble on one section, you may not even then suspect the fulness of my labours. Accordingly, I started in a new place, below the wire, and hoping to work up to it. It was perhaps lucky I had so bad a cutlass, and my smarting hand bid me stay before I had got up to the wire, but just in season, so that I was only the better of my activity, not dead beat as yesterday.

A strange business it was, and infinitely solitary; away above, the sun was in the high tree-tops; the lianas noosed and sought to hang me; the saplings struggled, and came up with that sob of death that one gets to know so well; great, soft, sappy trees fell at a lick of the cutlass, little tough switches laughed at and dared my best endeavour. Soon, toiling down in that pit of verdure, I heard blows on the far side, and then laughter. I confess a chill settled on my heart. Being so dead alone, in a place where by rights none should be beyond me, I was aware, upon interrogation, if those blows had drawn nearer, I should (of course quite unaffectedly) have executed a strategic movement to the rear; and only the other day I was lamenting my insensibility to superstition! Am I beginning to be sucked in? Shall I become a midnight twitterer like my neighbours? At times I thought the blows were echoes; at times I thought the laughter was from birds. For our birds are strangely human in their calls. Vaea mountain about sundown sometimes rings with shrill cries, like the hails of merry, scattered children. As a matter of fact, I believe stealthy wood-cutters from Tanugamanono were above me in the wood and answerable for the blows; as for the laughter, a woman and two children had come and asked Fanny's leave to go up shrimp-fishing in the burn; beyond doubt, it was these I heard. Just at the right time I returned; to wash down, change, and begin this snatch of letter before dinner was ready, and to finish it afterwards, before Henry has yet put in an appearance for his lesson in "long explessions."

Dinner: stewed beef and potatoes, baked bananas, new loaf-bread hot from the oven, pine-apple in claret. These are great days; we have been low in the past; but now are we as belly-gods, enjoying all things.

Thomas Carlyle meets Queen Victoria

(To Mrs. Aitken, Dumfries)

CHELSEA, *March* 11, 1869

DEAR JEAN,— . . . "Interview" took place this day gone a week; nearly a week before that, the Dean and Deaness (who is called Lady Augusta Stanley, once *Bruce*, an active hand and busy little woman) drove up here in a solemnly mysterious, though half quizzical manner, invited me for Thursday, 4th, 5 p.m.:—must come, a very "high or indeed highest person has long been desirous," etc. etc. I saw well enough it was the Queen incognita; and briefly agreed to come. "Half-past 4 COME *you*!" and then went their ways.

Walking up at the set time, I was then ushered into a long drawing-room in their monastic edifice. I found no Stanley there; only at the farther end, a tall old Gear-pole[1] of a Mrs. Grote,—the most wooden woman I know in London or the world, who thinks herself very clever, etc.,—the sight of whom taught me to expect others; as accordingly, in a few minutes, fell out. Grote and wife, Sir Charles Lyell and ditto, Browning and myself, were I saw to be our party. "Better than bargain! These will take the edge off the thing, if edge it have!"—which it hadn't, nor threatened to have.

The Stanleys and we were all in a flow of talk, and some flunkies had done setting coffee-pots, tea-cups of sublime patterns, when Her Majesty, punctual to a minute, glided softly in, escorted by her Dame in Waiting (a Dowager Duchess of Athol) and by the Princess Louise, decidedly a very pretty young lady, and *clever* too, as I found in speaking to her afterwards.

[1] Irish weaver implement.

The Queen came softly forward, a kindly little smile on her face; gently shook hands with all three women, gently acknowledged with a nod the silent deep bow of us male monsters; and directly in her presence everybody was as if at ease again. She is a comely little lady with a pair of kind, clear, and intelligent grey eyes; still looks plump and almost young (in spite of one broad wrinkle that shows in each cheek *occasionally*); has a fine low voice; soft indeed her whole manner is and melodiously perfect; it is impossible to imagine a *politer* little woman—nothing the least imperious; all gentle, all *sincere*-looking; unembarrassing, rather attractive even;—*makes* you feel too (if you have sense in you) that she is Queen.

After, a little word to each of us in succession as we stood, —to me it was, "Sorry you did not see my Daughter," Princess of Prussia (or, "she sorry," perhaps?) which led us into Potsdam, Berlin, etc., for an instant or two; to Sir Charles Lyell I heard her say, "Gold in Sutherland," but quickly and delicately cut him *short* in responding; to Browning, "Are you writing anything?" (he has just been publishing the absurdest of things!); to Grote I did not hear what she said; but it was touch and go with everybody; Majesty visibly *without* interest or nearly so of her *own*.

This done, coffee (very black and muddy) was handed round; Queen and three women taking seats in opposite corners, Mrs. Grote in a chair *intrusively close* to Majesty, Lady Lyell modestly at the *diagonal* corner; we others obliged to stand, and hover within call. Coffee fairly done, Lady Augusta called me gently to "Come and speak with Her Majesty." I obeyed, first asking, as an old and infirmish man, Majesty's permission to *sit*, which was graciously conceded. Nothing of the least significance was said, nor *needed*; however, my bit of

dialogue went very well. "What part of Scotland I came from?" "Dumfries-shire (where Majesty might as well go some time); Carlisle, *i.e. Caer-Lewal*, a place about the antiquity of King Solomon (according to Milton, whereat Majesty smiled); Border-Ballads (and even old Jamie Pool slightly alluded to,—not by name!); Glasgow, and even Grandfather's ride thither,—ending in mere *psalms*, and streets *vacant* at half-past nine p.m.;—hard sound and genuine Presbyterian *root* of what has now shot up to be such a monstrous ugly cabbage-tree and Hemlock-tree!" all which Her Majesty seemed to take rather well.

Whereupon Mrs. Grote rose, and good naturedly brought forward her Husband to her own chair, *cheek by jowl* with Her Majesty, who evidently did not care a straw for him, but kindly asked "Writing anything?" and one heard "Aristotle, now that I have done with Plato," etc., etc.—but only for a minimum of time. Majesty herself (I think apropos of some question of my *shaking hand*) said something about her own difficulty in writing by dictation, which brought forward Lady Lyell and husband, naturally used to the operation—after which, talk becoming trivial, Majesty gracefully retired,—Lady Augusta with her,—and in ten minutes more, returned to receive our farewell bows; which, too, she did very prettily; and sailed out as if moving on skates, and bending her head towards us with a smile. By the Underground Railway I was home before seven, and out of the adventure, with only a headache of little moment.

Froude tells me there are foolish *myths* about the poor business, especially about my share of it, but this is the real truth;—*worth* to me, in strict speech, all but nothing; the *myths* even less than nothing. . . .

T. CARLYLE

A Questionable Model

Mary Guilhermin, 1766, instructs children in the art of letter-writing

DEAR PAPA,—Yesterday, after an agreeable walk of half-a-mile to our parish church, I was inspired with a truly unaffected zeal to join in that well composed form of prayer contained in our Church liturgy, expressed in so audible, so solemn, so easy an elocution, so emphatic, without the least tincture of pedantry, that the divine proved to his congregation he was sensible that he was addressing the Supreme Being, which dispenses happiness to mankind, and inspired everyone with a real fervency to join in prayer and thanksgiving to our Creator. When he mounted the pulpit, his grave deportment drew the attention of old and young. His subject, on the reciprocal duties between parents and children, warmed one with a lively gratitude for your kind nurture of me from tender infancy till now. Every duty he mentioned that is required from the parent I was persuaded you had performed in regard to me, and upon examination, finding myself too often deficient in my past, have resolved to amend past errors, and by a uniform good behaviour prove myself to be your

GRATEFUL AND FAITHFUL SON

III

THE FAMILIAR MANNER

Miss Austen tells all the news

I

STEVENTON, *Tuesday, December* 1798

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,—Your letter came quite as soon as I expected, and so your letters will always do, because I have made it a rule not to expect them till they come, in which I think I consult the ease of us both.

It is a great satisfaction to us to hear that your business is in a way to be settled, and so settled as to give you as little inconvenience as possible. You are very welcome to my father's name and to his services if they are ever required in it. I shall keep my ten pounds too, to wrap myself up in next winter.

I took the liberty a few days ago of asking your black velvet bonnet to lend me its cawl, which it very readily did, and by which I have been enabled to give a considerable improvement of dignity to cap, which was before too *nidgetty* to please me. I shall wear it on

Thursday, but I hope you will not be offended with me for following your advice as to its ornaments only in part. I still venture to retain the narrow silver round it, put twice round without any bow, and instead of the black military feather shall put in the coquelicot one as being smarter, and besides coquelicot is to be all the fashion this winter. After the ball I shall probably make it entirely black.

I am sorry that our dear Charles begins to feel the dignity of ill-usage. My father will write to Admiral Gambier. He must have already received so much satisfaction from his acquaintance and patronage of Frank, that he will be delighted, I dare say, to have another of the family introduced to him. I think it would be very right in Charles to address Sir Thomas on the occasion, though I cannot approve of *your* scheme of writing to him (which you communicated to me a few nights ago) to request him to come here and convey you to Steventon. To do you justice, however, you had some doubts of the propriety of such a measure yourself.

I am very much obliged to my dear little George for his message—for his *love* at least; his *duty*, I suppose, was only in consequence of some hints of my favourable intentions towards him from his father or mother. I am sincerely rejoiced, however, that I ever was born, since it has been the means of procuring him a dish of tea. Give my best love to him.

This morning has been made very gay to us by visits from our two lively neighbours, Mr. Holder and Mr. John Harwood.

I have received a very civil note from Mrs. Martin, requesting my name as a subscriber to her Library, which opens January 14, and my name, or rather yours, is accordingly given. My mother finds the money. May

subscribes too, which I am glad of, but hardly expected. As an inducement to subscribe, Mrs. Martin tells me that her collection is not to consist only of novels, but of every kind of literature, etc. She might have spared this pretension to *our* family, who are great novel-readers and not ashamed of being so ; but it was necessary, I suppose, to the self-consequence of half her subscribers.

I hope and imagine that Edward Taylor is to inherit all Sir Edward Dering's fortune as well as all his own father's. I took care to tell Mrs. Lefroy of your calling on her mother, and she seemed pleased with it.

I enjoyed the hard black frosts of last week very much, and one day while they lasted walked to Deane by myself. I do not know that I ever did such a thing in my life before.

Charles Powlett has been very ill, but is getting well again. His wife is discovered to be everything that the neighbourhood could wish her, silly and cross as well as extravagant.

Earle Harwood and his friend Mr. Bailey came to Deane yesterday, but are not to stay above a day or two. Earle has got the appointment to a prison ship at Portsmouth, which he has been for some time desirous of having, and he and his wife are to live on board for the future.

We dine now at half-past three, and have done dinner, I suppose, before you begin. We drink tea at half-past six. I am afraid you will despise us. My father reads Cowper to us in the morning, to which I listen when I can. How do you spend your evenings? I guess that Elizabeth works, that you read to her, and that Edward goes to sleep. My mother continues hearty ; her appetite and nights are very good, but she complains of an asthma, a dropsy, water in her chest, and a liver disorder.

The third Miss Irish Lefroy is going to be married to

a Mr. Courteney, but whether James or Charles I do not know. Miss Lyford is gone into Suffolk with her brother and Miss Lodge. Everybody is now busy in making up an income for the two latter. Miss Lodge has only 800*l.* of her own, and it is not supposed that her father can give her much; therefore the good offices of the neighbourhood will be highly acceptable. John Lyford means to take pupils.

James Digweed has had a very ugly cut—how could it happen? It happened by a young horse which he had lately purchased, and which he was trying to back into its stable; the animal kicked him down with his fore feet, and kicked a great hole on his head; he scrambled away as soon as he could, but was stunned for a time, and suffered a good deal of pain afterwards. Yesterday he got upon the horse again, and, for fear of something worse, was forced to throw himself off.

Wednesday.—I have changed my mind, and changed the trimmings of my cap this morning: they are now such as you suggested. I felt as if I should not prosper if I strayed from your directions, and I think it makes me look more like Lady Conyngham now than it did before, which is all that one lives for now. I believe I *shall* make my new gown like my robe, but the back of the latter is all in a piece with the tail, and will seven yards enable me to copy it in that respect?

Mary went to church on Sunday, and had the weather been smiling, we should have seen her before this time. Perhaps I may stay at Manydown as long as Monday, but not longer. Martha sends me word that she is too busy to write to me now, and but for your letter I should have supposed her deep in the study of medicine preparatory to their removal from Ibthorp. The letter to Gambier goes to-day.

I expect a very stupid ball; there will be nobody worth dancing with, and nobody worth talking to but Catherine, for I believe Mrs. Lefroy will not be there. Lucy is to go with Mrs. Russell.

People get so horribly poor and economical in this part of the world that I have no patience with them. Kent is the only place for happiness; everybody is rich there. I must do similar justice, however, to the Windsor neighbourhood. I have been forced to let James and Miss Debry have two sheets of your drawing-paper, but they shan't have any more; there are not above three or four left, besides one of a smaller and richer sort. Perhaps you may want some more if you come through town in your return, or rather buy some more, for your wanting it will not depend on your coming through town, I imagine. I have just heard from Martha and Frank: his letter was written on November 12. All well and nothing particular

J. A.

II

CHAWTON, *Friday* (*May* 31), 1811

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,—I have a magnificent project. The Cookes have put off their visit to us; they are not well enough to leave home at present, and we have no chance of seeing them till I do not know when—probably never in this house.

This circumstance has made me think the present time would be favourable for Miss Sharpe's coming to us, it seems a more disengaged period with us than we are likely to have later in the summer. If Frank and Mary do come, it can hardly be before the middle of July, which will be allowing a reasonable length of visit for Miss Sharpe, supposing she begins it when you return;

and if you and Martha do not dislike the plan, and she can avail herself of it, the opportunity of her being conveyed hither will be excellent.

I shall write to Martha by this post, and if neither you nor she make any objection to my proposal, I shall make the invitation directly, and as there is no time to lose, you must write by return of post if you have any reason for not wishing it done. It was her intention, I believe, to go first to Mr. Lloyd, but such a means of getting here may influence her otherwise.

We have had a thunder-storm again, this morning.

Your letter came to comfort me for it.

I have taken your hint, slight as it was, and have written to Mrs. Knight, and most sincerely do I hope it will not be in vain. I cannot endure the idea of her giving away her own wheel, and have told her no more than the truth, in saying that I could never use it with comfort. I had a great mind to add that, if she persists in giving it, I would spin nothing with it but a rope to hang myself, but I was afraid of making it appear a less serious matter of feeling than it really is.

I am glad you are so well yourself, and wish everybody else were equally so. I will not say that your mulberry-trees are dead, but I am afraid they are not alive. We shall have pease soon. I mean to have them with a couple of ducks from Wood Barn, and Maria Middleton, towards the end of next week.

From Monday to Wednesday Anna is to be engaged at Faringdon, in order that she may come in for the gaieties of Tuesday (the 4th), on Selborne Common, where there are to be volunteers and felicities of all kinds. Harriet B. is invited to spend the day with the John Whites, and her father and mother have very kindly undertaken to get Anna invited also.

Harriet and Eliza dined here yesterday, and we walked back with them to tea—not my mother—she has a cold, which affects her in the usual way, and was not equal to the walk. She is better this morning, and I hope will soon physick away the worst part of it. It has not confined her; she has got out every day that the weather has allowed her.

Poor Anna is also suffering from *her* cold, which is worse to-day, but as she has no sore throat I hope it may spend itself by Tuesday. She had a delightful evening with the Miss Middletons—syllabub, tea, coffee, singing, dancing, a hot supper, eleven o'clock, everything that can be imagined agreeable. She desires her best love to Fanny, and will answer her letter before she leaves Chawton, and engages to send her a particular account of the Selborne day.

We cannot agree as to which is the eldest of the two Miss Plumbtrees; send us word. Have you remembered to collect pieces for the patch work? We are now at a standstill. I got up here to look for the old map, and can now tell you that it shall be sent to-morrow; it was among the great parcel in the dining-room. As to my debt of 3s. 6d. to Edward, I must trouble you to pay it when you settle with him for your boots.

We begun our China tea three days ago, and I find it very good. My companions know nothing of the matter. As to Fanny and her twelve pounds in a twelve month, she may talk till she is as black in the face as her own tea, but I cannot believe her—more likely twelve pounds to a quarter.

I have a message to you from Mrs. Cooke. The substance of it is, that she hopes you will take Bookham in your way home, and stay there as long as you can, and that when you must leave them they will convey

you to Guildford. You may be sure that it is very kindly worded, and that there is no want of attendant compliments to my brother and his family.

I am very sorry for Mary, but I have some comfort in there being two curates now lodging in Bookham, besides their own Mr. Waineford, from Dorking, so that I think she must fall in love with one or the other.

How horrible it is to have so many people killed! And what a blessing that one cares for none of them!

I return to my letter-writing from calling on Miss Harriot Webb, who is short and not quite straight, and cannot pronounce an R any better than her sisters; but she has dark hair, a complexion to suit, and, I think, has the pleasantest countenance and manner of the three—the most natural.

She appears very well pleased with her new home, and they are all reading with delight Mrs. H. More's recent publication.

You cannot imagine—it is not in human nature to imagine—what a nice walk we have round the orchard. The row of beech looks very well indeed, and so does the young quickset hedge in the garden. I hear to-day that an apricot has been detected on one of the trees. My mother is perfectly convinced *now* that she shall not be overpowered by her cleft-wood, and I believe I would rather have more than less. Strange to tell, Mr. Prowting was *not* at Miss Lee's wedding, but his daughters had some cake, and Anna had her share of it.

I continue to like our old cook quite as well as ever, and, but that I am afraid to write in her praise, I could say that she seems just the servant for us. Her cookery is at least tolerable; her pastry is the only deficiency.

God bless you, and I hope June will find you well, and bring us together.—Yours ever, JANE

I hope you understand that I do not expect you to write on Sunday if you like my plan. I shall consider silence as consent.

III

HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.
Wednesday, September 15, ½ past 8 [1813]

HERE I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the breakfast, dining, sitting-room, beginning with all my might. Fanny will join me as soon as she is dressed and begin her letter. We had a very good journey, weather and roads excellent; the three first stages for 1s. 6d., and our only misadventure the being delayed about a quarter of an hour at Kingston for horses, and being obliged to put up with a pair belonging to a hackney coach and their coachman, which left no room on the barouche box for Lizzy, who was to have gone her last stage there as she did the first; consequently we were all four within, which was a little crowded.

We arrived at a quarter past four, and were kindly welcomed by the coachman, and then by his master, and then by William, and then by Mrs. Pengird, who all met us before we reached the foot of the stairs. Mdme Bigion was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of soup, fish, bouillée, partridges, and an apple tart, which we sat down to soon after five, after cleaning and dressing ourselves and feeling that we were most commodiously disposed of. The little adjoining dressing-room to our apartment makes Fanny and myself very well off indeed, and as we have poor Eliza's bed our space is ample every way.

Sace arrived safely at about half-past six. At seven we set off in a coach for the Lyceum, were at home

again in about four hours and a half; had soup, and wine and water, and then went to our holes.

Edward finds his quarters very small and quiet. I must get a softer pen. This is harder. I am in agonies. I have not yet seen Mr. Crabbe. Martha's letter is gone to the post.

I am going to write nothing but short sentences. There shall be two full stops in every line. Layton and Shear's *is* Bedford House. We mean to get there before breakfast if it's possible; for we feel more and more how much we have to do and how little time. This house looks very nice. It seems like Sloane Street moved here. I believe Henry is just rid of Sloane Street. Fanny does not come, but I have Edward seated by me beginning a letter, which looks natural.

Henry has been suffering from the pain in the face which he has been subject to before. He caught cold at Matlock, and since his return has been paying a little for past pleasure. It is nearly removed now, but he looks thin in the face, either from the pain or the fatigues of his tour, which must have been great.

Lady Robert is delighted with *P. and P.*, and really *was* so, as I understand, before she knew who wrote it, for of course she knows now. He told her with as much satisfaction as if it were my wish. He did not tell *me* this, but he told Fanny. And Mr. Hastings! I am quite delighted with what such a man writes about it. Henry sent him the books after his return from Daylesford, but you will hear the letter too.

Let me be rational, and return to my two full stops.

I talked to Henry at the play last night. We were in a private box—Mr. Spencer's—which made it much more pleasant. The box is directly on the stage. One is infinitely less fatigued than in the common way. But

Henry's plans are not what one could wish. He does not mean to be at Chawton till the 29th. He must be in town again by Oct. 5. His plan is to get a couple of days of pheasant shooting and then return directly.

His wish was to bring you back with him. I have told him of your scruples. He wishes you to suit yourself as to time, and if you cannot come till later, will send for you any time as far as Bagshot. He presumed you would not find difficulty in getting so far. I could not say you would. He proposed your going with him into Oxfordshire. It was his own thought at first. I could not but catch at it for you.

We have talked of it again this morning (for now we have breakfasted), and I am convinced that if you can make it suit in other respects you need not scruple on his account. If you cannot come back with him on the 3rd or 4th, therefore, I do hope you will contrive to go to Adlestrop. By not beginning your absence till about the middle of this month I think you may manage it very well. But you will think all this over. One could wish he had intended to come to you earlier, but it cannot be helped.

I said nothing to him of Mrs. H. and Miss B. that he might not suppose difficulties. Shall not you put them into our own room? This seems to me the best plan, and the maid will be most conveniently near. Oh, dear me! When shall I ever have done? We *did* go to Layton and Shear's before breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4s. 3d.; Irish ditto at 6s.; *more* pretty, certainly—beautiful.

Fanny and the two girls are gone to take places for to-night at Covent Garden; *Clandestine Marriage* and *Midas*. The latter will be a fine show for L. and M. They revelled last night in *Don Juan*, whom we left in

Hell at half-past eleven. We had Scaramouch and a ghost, and were delighted. I speak of *them*; *my* delight was very tranquil, and the rest of us were sober-minded. *Don Juan* was the last of three musical things. *Five Hours at Brighton*, in three acts—of which one was over before we arrived, none the worse—and the *Beehive*, rather less flat and trumpery.

I have this moment received 5*l.* from kind, beautiful Edward. Fanny has a similar gift. I shall save what I can of it for your better leisure in this place. *My* letter was from Miss Sharpe—nothing particular. A letter from Fanny Cage this morning.

Four o'clock.—We are just come back from doing Mr. Tickars, Miss Hare, and Mr. Spence. Mr. Hall is here, and, while Fanny is under his hands, I will try to write a little more.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only *white* satin instead of blue. It will be white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as 1*l.* 16s. My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from Mrs. Tickars' young lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all; *that* was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Going to Mr. Spence's was a sad business and cost us many tears; unluckily we were obliged to go a second time before he could do more than just look. We went first at half-past twelve and afterwards at three; papa with us each time; and, alas! we are to go again to-morrow.

Lizzy is not finished yet. There have been no teeth taken out, however, nor will be, I believe, but he finds *hers* in a very bad state, and seems to think particularly ill of their durableness. They have been all cleaned, *hers* filed, and are to be filed again. There is a very sad hole between two of her front teeth.

Thursday morning, half-past seven.—Up and dressed and downstairs in order to finish my letter in time for the parcel. At eight I have an appointment with Madame B., who wants to show me something downstairs. At nine we are to set off for Grafton House, and get that over before breakfast. Edward is so kind as to walk there with us. We are to be at Mr. Spence's again at 11.5; from that time shall be driving about I suppose till four o'clock at least. We are, if possible, to call on Mrs. Tilson.

Mr. Hall was very punctual yesterday, and curled me out at a great rate. I thought its look hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold, however. The weather is all in my favour. I have no pain in my face since I left you.

We had very good places in the box next the stage-box, front and second row; the three old ones behind of course. I was particularly disappointed at seeing nothing of Mr. Crabbe. I felt sure of him when I saw that the boxes were fitted up with crimson velvet. The new Mr. Terry was Lord Ogleby, and Henry thinks he may do; but there was no acting more than moderate, and I was as much amused by the remembrances connected with *Midas* as with any part of it. The girls were very much delighted, but still prefer *Don Juan*; and I must say that I have seen nobody on the stage who has been a

more interesting character than that compound of cruelty and lust.

It was not possible for me to get the worsteds yesterday. I heard Edward last night pressing Henry to come to you, and I think Henry engaged to go there after his November collection. Nothing has been done as to *S. and S.*

The books came to hand too late for him to have time for it before he went. Mr. Hastings never *hinted* at Eliza in the smallest degree. Henry knew nothing of Mr. Trimmer's death. I tell you these things that you may not have to ask them over again.

There is a new clerk sent down to Alton, a Mr. Edward Williams, a young man whom Henry thinks most highly of, and he turns out to be a son of the luckless Williamses of Grosvenor Place.

I long to have you hear Mr. H.'s opinion of *P and P.* His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me.

Instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it myself. I hope, at least, that I shall find some poplin at Layton and Shear's that will tempt me to buy it. If I do, it shall be sent to Chawton, as half will be for you; for I depend upon your being so kind as to accept it, being the main point. It will be a great pleasure to me. Don't say a word. I only wish you could choose too. I shall send twenty yards.

Now for Bath. Poor F. Cage has suffered a good deal from her accident. The noise of the White Hart was terrible to her. They will keep her quiet, I dare say. *She* is not so much delighted with the place as the rest of the party; probably, as she says herself, from having been less well, but she thinks she should like it

better in the season. The streets are very empty now, and the shops not so gay as she expected. They are at No. 1 Henrietta Street, the corner of Laura Place, and have no acquaintance at present but the Bramstons. Lady Bridges drinks at the Cross Bath, her son at the Hot, and Louisa is going to bathe. Dr. Parry seems to be half starving Mr. Bridges, for he is restricted to much such a diet as James's bread, water and meat, and is never to eat so much of that as he wishes, and he is to walk a great deal—walk till he drops, I believe—gout or no gout. It really is to that purpose.

I have not exaggerated.

Charming weather for you and me, and the travellers, and everybody. You will take your walk this afternoon, and . . .

Dame Dorothy Browne (Sir Thomas Browne's lady) gives postscript news of the health and well-being of Master Tommy Browne, her grandson

I

Aug. 29 [1678]

DEARE SONNE,— . . . I bless God your Tomy is very well; goos to scolle, and is a very good boy, and delights his grandfather when hee comes home.

II

June 28 [1679?]

DEARE DAUGHTER,— . . . Wee dayly wish for the new cloths; all our linen being worne out but shefts, and Tomey would give all his stock to see his briches. I bless God wee ar all well as I hope you ar. Tomey presents his dutty, your sisters all love and services.—Your affectionate mother, DOROTHY BROWNE

III

July 5 [1679]

TOMEY have receved his cloues, and is much delighted, and sends you and his mother and grandmother dutty and thanckes, and meanes to war them carefully.

IV

Novemb. vii. [1679]

DEARE DAUGHTER,—I thanck God for your latter, and shall be so glad to see my Tomey returne in helth though ever so durty; hee knows fullars earth will cleane all. I besich God of his mercy blesse you all.—Your affectinat mothar,

DOROTHY BROWNE

V

Sept. 6 [1680]

I BLESS God wee all continow wel, and Tomey present his dutty to you and his fathar, and give you many thanks for your touken. Hee did thinke to wright him selfe. Hee is now a very good boy for his boak, I can assuer you, and delights to read to his grandfather and I, when he coms from schole. God of his mercy bless you all.—Your affectinat mothar,

DOROTHY BROWNE

VI

Feb. xiii. [1681–2]

YOUR Tomey grows a stout fellow, I hope you will com and see him this svmmor, hee is in great expextion of a tumbler you must send him for his popet show, a punch he has and his wife, and a straw king and quen, and ladies of honor, and all things but a tumbler, which this town cannot aford: it is a wodin fellow that turns his heles over his head. . . .

IV

THE GRAND STYLE

The Swan of Lichfield greets the Ladies of Llangollen

(To the Right Hon. Lady Eleanor Butler, and Miss Ponsonby)

LICHFIELD, *April* 24, 1798

THE frame for Honora's exact, though accidental, resemblance in the print of Romney's Serena reading by candle light, is at length arrived. I dare believe my charming friends will think the figure, countenance, and features express the sweetness, intelligence and grace, with which the strains, honoured by their mutual partiality, invest the fair friend of my youth.

You must each have been deeply disquieted by the miserable scenes which have been acted in your native Ireland since I had last the honour to address you. None of your particular friends are, I trust, on the dire list of those who have fallen the victims of its assassinations. Had my gallant friend, the murdered Colonel St. George, the happiness of your acquaintance?—Of him at least you must well know, from your intimacy with his lovely and accomplished sister-in-law.

Miss Seward improves Fénelon

My *Telemachus* has taken a snail's walk since I gave myself the pleasure of writing to you. Two mornings of leisure, the only ones I could obtain in the interim, produced the enclosed extract. You have heard me say, that I could scarcely ever persuade myself to admit the Muses, in exclusion of any social or epistolary duty or pleasure. Small, therefore, with connections and correspondence so numerous, is the probability that I shall ever finish an epic poem.

You will perceive that Fénelon's *Telemachus* forms as yet but the mere basis of this attempted work; but I conclude, that when the prince, in what will form my third book, narrates his own adventures, I must be more indebted to the prose composition. Whether those incidents, not very interesting from Fénelon's pen, are capable of receiving poetic spirit and animation from mine, remains to be tried. If I retain my excursive manner of going over the ground, there will be sufficient length for an epic poem, without pursuing the long train of less animated events that ensues after Telemachus and Mentor quit Calypso's island. Homer follows not Achilles when he leaves the ruins of Troy; and if Virgil had not followed Æneas after he left Carthage, his poem, though less complete, would have been more interesting. After the death of Dido I yawned through the remainder; read it once as a task, and never since looked into the pages beyond that epoch.

Ah! dearest ladies, how groundless has the assertion proved on which every one relied, that Duncan's victory threw the perils of invasion at a wide distance!—but I will not pursue the alarming subject.

This day a summer's sun warmly gilds the fields, the gardens, and the groves, now diffusing fragrance, and bursting into bloom. Fresh and undulating breezes from

the east lured me into my drawing-room, having placed in its lifted sash the Æolian harp. It is, at this instant, warbling through all the varieties of the harmonic chords. This apartment looks upon a small lawn, gently sloping upwards. Till this spring, it was shrubbery to the edge of the grassy terrace on its summit; but I have lately covered it with a fine turf, sprinkled with cypresses, junipers, and laurels. It is bordered on the right hand by tall laburnums, lilacks, and trees of the Gelder rose,

> "——throwing up, 'mid trees of darker leaf,
> Its silver globes, light as the foamy surf,
> Which the wind severs from the broken wave."

Beyond this little lawny elevation, the wall which divides its terrace from the sweet valley it overlooks, is not visible. These windows command the loveliest part of that valley, and only its first field is concealed by the sloping swell of the fore-ground.

The vale is scarcely half a mile across, bounded, basin-like, by a semicircle of gentle hills, luxuriantly foliaged. There is a lake in its bosom, and a venerable old church, with its grey and moss-grown tower on the water's edge. Left of that old church, on the rising ground beyond, stands an elegant villa half shrouded in its groves; and, to the right below, on the bank of the lake, another villa with its gardens. The as yet azure waters are but little intercepted by the immense and very ancient willow that stands opposite these windows in the middle of the vale; that willow, whose height and dimensions are the wonder of naturalists. The centre of the lake gleams through its wide-spread branches, and it appears on each side like a considerable river, from its boundaries being concealed.

On the right, one of our streets runs from the town to the water, interspersed with trees and gardens. It looks

like an umbraged village, and is all we see from hence of the city, so that nothing can be more quiet and rural than the landscape. It is less beautiful in summer than in spring, from the weeds that sprout up in the lake, and from the set which partially creeps upon its surface.

In my youth, it was always clear—but it is said that, some fifteen years back, two of our gormandizing aldermen took a boat and sowed it with water-lilies to preserve the fish. The mischief is irreparable, since the cleansing it receives every autumn only procures transparence till the sun of middle summer enables the deep-rooted weeds to defy the scythe and the shovel.

What shall I say for the slovenliness of the inclosed transcripts? — Thus you behold my incorrigible pen sinning, from time to time, against the fairness of transcription, — sinning and confessing, like a frail papist, and repenting without amendment.

What lovely weather! Our valley is bursting into bloom, and the fruit trees of a large public garden in one part of it, now in full blossom, presents a grove of silver, amidst the lively and tender green of the fields and hedgerows. Alas! the melancholy of the apprehensive heart is rather increased than abated by this vernal luxury. It seems but as gay garlands on the neck of a victim.

In every frame of mind, I remain, dearest ladies, etc.

The Swan of Lichfield word-paints

(To the Rev. Dr. Parr)

SCARBOROUGH, *July* 27, 1793

DISEASE gloomed, and made long my wintry and vernal hours, since I had the honour and delight of conversing with you in Warwickshire. Dr. Darwin

enjoined that I should go to Buxton in June, pass some weeks there, and then travel onward to the North Coast, for the benefit of the sea-bathing. Inexpressibly do I regret this watery discipline, whose necessity has deprived me of the power to receive that highly gratifying visit from Dr. Parr, the hope of which had been so precious.

Travelling thus far to obtain the smiles of Hygeia, I am ordered to wait upon her naiads on the ocean brim, during a period of equal length with that on which I courted those who administer at her soft fountains in Derbyshire. Having promised to pause on my way home with some friends of my infancy and youth in Yorkshire, it must be the second week in September ere I can return to Lichfield. I fear your attention to your pupils will not suffer me then to enjoy that pleasure of which this reluctant excursion has deprived me. Surely you could not doubt my being absent from Lichfield, when you waited in vain for an acknowledgment, so instantly due. May I hope to see you during the Christmas recess? Whenever you shall again extend to me an expectation thus flattering, I will avoid every interfering scheme.

My health is better than it was in the winter and spring, though I am still often indisposed. My obligations are perhaps more to the warmth of summer for this amendment, than to my libations from the naiads, and immersion in their waves, than to the attractions and repulsions of stranger intercourse; or even to the dearer society it has afforded me with long absent friends. When the spirit of youth has evaporated, fatigues are not easily recompensed to the languid, or broken habits to the stationary. Often, in this absence from our little city, do I look back with home-sick eyes to my umbrageous

retreat beneath its spires, especially when the swart star glares.

This gay and busy shore has considerable picturesque beauty, as perhaps you are visually conscious; but I regret that its seas have slept since my arrival in mirror calmness, and would have thanked the ruder winds to have lashed them into sublimity.

The pleasure of Mr. Dewes',—of Mr. and Mrs. Grenville's, and Miss Delabere's society, allured me hither from my purposed residence, on the more retired coast of Bridlington, twenty miles from hence. Amiable Lord and Lady Lifford are of their party. My daily visits to them have constituted the chief though not the sole social charm of this bustling scene; yet alas! it has been often darkened by concern, to see dear Mr. Dewes so languid and out of health. We hope and trust, however, that his complaints are not dangerous.

That interesting group leave Scarborough on Monday, and therefore I have promised to meet my old friends of this country the ensuing week at Bridlington, if lodgings can be procured for us there.

Do you not admire this second Judith, the young fair one of Normandy, who has slain the bloody dictator at Paris, without waiting for his intoxication, or his slumber, to give her courage for the blow?

Adieu, dear and honoured Sir. I dare assure myself, you rejoice that our political horizon is cleared of that lurid turbidity with which it scowled when we met in Warwickshire.

Invoked Sublimity

The Swan of Lichfield contemplates the ocean

(To Mr. Saville)

SCARBOROUGH, *July* 29, 1793

THIS morning the dear party, vanishing from the cliff, dissolved for me the magnetism of Scarborough. I passed almost the whole of yesterday with them. Mr. Dewes, inquiring after you, most kindly bids me say, that he sincerely rejoices in the benefit your health has received from your excursion to Weymouth. He does not think himself better; but I trust he is mistaken. O! justly do you say, that we cannot afford to lose such men, so thinly sown in this thick-swarming world.

That I am most truly glad of the renovated health you have imbibed on the ocean's edge, you surely will not doubt; nor that I sympathise with every good that is ordained you, with every joy that you feel. I praise you for resisting the sailing temptations, for not trusting the flattery of the summer-seas, which has so often proved fatal where the security was no less apparent.

Whenever the wind blows from the east at this port, however calmly it may breathe on shore, the sea runs high. All yesterday it had a large portion of the sublimity I had invoked. About a quarter of a mile down the right-hand sands, a small promontory juts out; upon its topmost bank, about twenty yards high, the chalybeate springs arise; and there also a fort is constructed, with parapet walls, to which we ascend by steps. At high-water, the sea encircles this promontory, and lashes its rocks.

Last night, at eight o'clock, as we walked upon the cliff, we saw the waves of a sublimely agitated sea dashing

and bounding up the sides of the fort, their spray flying over its parapets. The tide was then on the turn, and we were told that, in about an hour, we might walk to the promontory, by keeping close to the base of the rocks, and attain the elevation before the waves had ceased to lash and clamber up its walls. Nobody but myself being inclined to venture, I went home to undress, resolved to taste, amidst the incumbent gloom of a very lowering night, a scene congenial to my taste for the terrible graces. Requesting the stout arm of Mr. Dewes's servant, I began with him my sombre expedition. As I passed along the sands, the tide twice left its white surf upon my feet; and the vast curve of those fierce waves, that burst down with deafening roar, scarce three yards from me, sufficiently gratified my rage for the terrific.

We found the lower steps of the fort inaccessible, from the waters not having yet receded from them; but, with some difficulty, climbing behind the rocks, I got upon a level with the sixth step, and was thus enabled to ascend the eminence. By this time, the last gloom of the night had fallen, and the white foam of the thundering waters made their "darkness visible." It seemed scarce possible that an unconscious element could wear such horrid appearances of living rage. Each billow seemed a voraginous monster, as it came roaring on, and dashed itself against the repelling walls. The spray of each flashing wave flew over my head, and wet me on its descent. The pealing waters, louder than thunder, made it impossible for me or the servant to hear each other speak. My own maid would not venture to accompany me on an expedition of such seeming peril. I stood at least half an hour on the wild promontory's top, almost totally encircled by the dark and furious main. It was half past ten when I returned to Lord Lifford's, to take

my leave of the party, and to acknowledge the infinitely kind attentions with which they had honoured me.

We passed Thursday last in a beautiful, a richly umbrageous, and romantic dale, about seven miles from hence; the rival, in picturesque graces, of most which adorn the Peak of Derbyshire, with only one inferiority, its water. The Vale of Hackness boasts only a tolerably broad and gurgling brook, which presumptuously assumes the name of Darrent. Screened by overhanging alders, it winds through the bosom of the glens, and is scarce seen, except on its brink; but, from the hills which encircle them, we see the ocean, covered with ships, stretching over the magnificent woods of Rainsford, that curtain the mountains with lavish luxuriance.

Mr. Dewes, and Master and Miss Hewit, the son and niece of Lord Lifford, and myself, went to Hackness in Lord Lifford's coach; graceful and amiable Lady Lifford, and Mr. and Mrs. Granville, on horseback. The village, "marked with a little spire," nestles deep in the vale: near it a small rural inn, for the accommodation of the numerous parties which resort from Scarborough, to enjoy a scene of such striking contrast with the uncurtained beach, the monotonous ocean, and the crowded town, whose red houses run up the cliffs, and parch in the noontide suns.

At this petit inn we dined in great plenty and comfort; our eggs and bacon, our cold mutton and pease, our roast fowl, and our gooseberry-pie, acquiring a relish from the ride, and previous ramble in the dale; relish which seldom seasons the viands of a pompous board.

We drank tea on the shady brim of the stream that huddles through a rocky channel, and with its liquid notes, assists the waving alders and taller beeches in tempering the heats of the day.

It was a scene and a society to soothe every latent discontent of the heart, and, as Milton says of Eden, to "chace all sorrow but despair."

I dine with the Wingfield party to-day, and accompany them to the ball at night. I went to the Friday assembly with Lady Lifford and Mrs. Granville. The present fashion of head-dress, unless tempered as it was by the hand of taste on Lady Lifford, Mrs. Granville, and Miss Wingfield, has an undoing influence upon youth and beauty. The Lady L——s had disposed their hair exactly to resemble the lank straight locks of a methodist parson, and wound it round with something they called turban, scarce resembling the Turkish head-dress, which is very graceful, and which Lady Lifford's, Mrs. Granville's, and Miss Wingfield's, as I observed before in my exception, did very much resemble; the Lady L——s looked like diseased heads bound up in towels. They were extremely unjust to their personal attractions. People who are of rank to lead the fashions, are either accountable for the false taste of ungraceful invention, or for grovelling acquiescence, in following the bad taste of others. Lady Susan is finely shaped, and dances accurately; but Lady Georgiana unites to all the skill and variety of step, the most joyous and liberal grace of the head and arms.—Adieu.

V

WITH A SPICE

Jane Welsh Carlyle tells all the news

I

(To T. Carlyle, Scotsbrig[1])

CLIFTON, *August* 29, 1837

DEAREST LOVE,—I have been too long waiting for certainties; *hithering* and *thithering* being a condition under which I find it almost impossible to write, or indeed to do anything except fret myself to fiddlestrings. What I generally do in such cases is to shape out a decision with all dispatch for *myself*, and leave the others to welter on in their own fashion. Accordingly, when I found on our arrival at Clifton that it was all in the wind whether we should stay there one week or two or three, and whether we should return straight to London or by Brighton, or by the Isle of Wight, or first making a "run over to Dublin," I im-

[1] Is gone on a tour with the elder Mr. and Mrs. Sterling, while I am in Scotland rusticating and vegetating.—T. C.

mediately announced my intention of descending by *Parachute*, and was only prevented from carrying it out by humane consideration for the parties in the Balloon, where there was evidently going to be an alarming explosion in case of my departure; Mrs. Sterling having set her heart for a visit of some length to the Bartons, and his Whirlwindship finding the whole Barton generation "creatures without stimulus," whom he was desirous to cut and run from, by "feeling it his duty to see poor Mrs. Carlyle 'ome." His secret purpose was evidently to take himself and me back in the carriage, and leave Mrs. S. to follow as she could; and this I felt would have been a very ungracious proceeding towards that good soul, who treats me with such kindness and consideration. I now perceive the use my company is of to them both, better than I did when we set out: I furnish, as it were, the sugar and ginger, which makes the alkali of the one and the tartaric acid of the other effervesce into a somewhat more agreeable draught; for, "the effervescing of these people!" To say the least "it is very absurd!" But I shall keep all my stock of *biographic notices* to enliven our winter evenings. Meanwhile you are to know that we left Malvern for Clifton a week ago, all of us with very dry eyes.

Mr. Sterling, on finding that certain lords who smiled deceitful at the Carlton Club, were absolutely inaccessible at the Foley Arms, suddenly discovered that your beautiful scenery was a great humbug, as you had only "to strip the soil a foot deep and it would be a vile black mass." Mrs. Sterling, in her querulous, qualifying, about it and about it way, doubted whether it was wholesome to overlook such a flat, "not but what it was very well to have seen *for once*, or if there was any necessity for living there, of course one would not object," etc.,

etc. :—and, for me *poverina*, from the first moment I set my eyes on the place, I foresaw that it would prove a failure; that it would neither make me a convert to Nature, nor find me in a new nervous system. Every day of our stay there I arose with a headache, and my nights were unspeakable; every day I felt more emphatically that *Nature* was an intolerable bore. Do not misconstrue me,—genuine, unsophisticated Nature, I grant you, is all very amiable and harmless; but beautiful Nature, which man has *exploited*, as a Reviewer does a work of genius, making it a peg to hang his own conceits upon, to enact his *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*[1] in,—beautiful Nature, which you look out upon from pea-green arbours, which you dawdle about in on the backs of donkeys, and where you are haunted with an everlasting smell of roast meat—all that I do declare to be the greatest of bores, and I would rather spend my days amidst acknowledged brick houses and paved streets, than in any such fools' paradise.

So entirely *unheimlich* I felt myself, that the day I got your Letter I cried over it for two or three hours. In other more favourable circumstances, I should have recognised the tone of sadness that ran all through it, as the simple effect of a tiresome journey, and a dose of physic at the end; but, read at Malvern, with headache and *ennui* for interpreters!—Alas! what could I do but fling myself on my bed and cry myself sick? I said to myself you were no better than when you left me, and all this absence was gone for nothing. I wanted to kiss you into something like cheerfulness, and the length of a kingdom was between us,—and if it had not—the probabilities are that, *with the best intentions*, I should have quarrelled with you rather. Poor men and poor

[1] Goethe's Dramas, *Triumph of Sensibility*.

women! what a time they have in this world, by destiny and their own deserving. But as Mr. Bradfute used to say, "tell us something we do not know."

Well, then, it is an absolute fact that his Whirlwindship and I rode to the top of Malvern Hill, each on a live donkey! Just figure it! with a Welsh lad whipping us up from behind; for they were the slowest of donkeys, though named in defiance of all probability, *Fly* and *Lively*. "The Devil confound your donkeys!" exclaimed my vivacious companion (who might really, I think, "but for the honour of the thing," and perhaps some small diminution of the danger of bursting his lungs, have as well walked!) "they are so stupidly stubborn that you might as well beat on a stick." "And isn't it a good thing they be stubborn, Sir?" said the lad, "as being, you see, that they have no sense; if they wasn't stubborn they might be for taking down the steep, and we wants no accidents, Sir." "Now," said I, "for the first time in my life I perceive why Conservatives are so stupidly stubborn; stubbornness, it seems, is a succedaneum for *sense*."—A flash of indignation—then in a soft tone, "Do you know, Mrs. Carlyle, you would be a vast deal more amiable, if you were not so damnably clever! This is a fair specimen of our talk at Malvern from dewy morn to balmy eve. My procedure at Worcester (where we passed two days, and whence I sent a Newspaper) was unexpected and disappointing in the extreme. I walked into the house of the illustrious Archdeacon along a lengthy passage, down two steps into an antique-looking drawing-room or suite of drawing-rooms; without giving proof of being anything out of the common. I cast my *nota-bene* eyes over the man:—a large portly figure, belonging to the rotund school, the very beau ideal of an old Abbot, with a

countenance full of twinkling intelligence and gregarious good humour, having a high metallic tone of voice, and a whisking suddenness of movement, accompanied by a peculiar fling of the coat-skirts, which reminded me forcibly of the *Archivarius Lindhorst.* I also flung a cursory glance on a table, where a massive lunch was spread out, such as realised one's sublimest conceptions of a Convent refectory; and then without more said or done, I pitched myself into a fluffy, snow-white bed, which was shown me as mine; where I lay twenty-four hours, not out of sheer contradiction, but because I really could no longer hold myself erect. In vain the prim Archdeconian *Perpetua* came at stated intervals to know if I wanted anything? receiving always for answer, "To be let alone"; and in vain the Whirlwind himself came at intervals not stated, to ask in a tone of deep, tho' loud pathos (for it was from outside the door) "if I believed that he was *exceedingly* sorry," receiving also one unvarying answer, "Yes, yes!" My headache refused to listen to the voice of either charmer till it had run its course. It was indeed a strange preternatural night, the first I passed in that Prebendary Establishment, right under the stroke (it seemed to me) of the great cathedral clock, which strikes even the quarters, haunted by the images of the large Archdeaconess and large pigeon-pie I had seen below, and surrounded by queer old cabinets and gigantic china bowls;—all which taken together had to my over-excited imagination a cast of magic! Especially in the dead of night, with a rushlight dimly lighting the chamber; and betwixt sleeping and waking. I repeatedly sprang up in a panic, with my head quite mystified between this Worcester Archdeacon and the German Archivarius, and could by no possibility *decide*

whether Archdeacon Singleton was not also the father of a green serpent and could make his face into a bronze knocker! Worthy man, when he welcomed me anew next day with the broadest smiles, he little suspected what strange thoughts I had had of him.

But I have quite miscalculated my distance, and have left no room for my travels' history since. The loss will not be material. Suffice it to say, we came from Malvern to Chepstow all in one day, besides "doing" Eastnor Castle, Goodrich Castle, Tintern Abbey, and Chepstow Castle; and the next, on to Clifton; thoroughly tired body and soul. We are in lodgings here: I have a quiet room, and sleep better. Every day we dine with the Bartons, the kindest people to dine with one could wish; but as he says, there is a lack of *stimulus*. The Brother that is returned from India is the most wonderful compound appearance of Cavaignac and—Mr. Bradfute: *ecco la combinazione!*[1] And now here is surprising news for you:—John Sterling is to be back in London, with his Wife and her little ones, about the 12th. He himself having turned towards Madeira, in consequence of cholera abroad; and the family to remain at Knightsbridge; which I do not think his Father half likes. Poor John is really a little flighty, "after all."

I fondly hope to quit Clifton the end of this present week; and to go home by the *base* of the isosceles triangle, which the Isle of Wight makes with Clifton and London, instead of along the two sides. I long

[1] Curious and tragicomical indeed; yet conceivable to me; like that of a sternly sorrowful leopard, with a pitifully ditto hare! Cavaignac is Godfroi, elder Brother of Eugène, subsequently President of the French Republic; Bradfute is the old Edinburgh Bookseller.—T. C.

for home, and to be putting in order for your coming. I shall send you a Newspaper immediately on my landing; and then you will write to say *when*. O, my Darling, we will surely be better, both of us, *there* again; effervescing even:—don't you think so? I made no "mark"—wrote nothing on any Newspaper,—it must have been some editorial mark of Mr. Sterling, which I had not noticed. I have sent you Papers from every large Town where I have been.

I have kept no room for kind messages. Say for me all that you know I would wish to say. I saw the Crawfords at Monmouth. Mr. C. is most emphatic for another Course of Lectures:—the *characters*, he thought a most glorious project. I have no doubt but you will find an audience prepared to be enchanted with you, whenever you want one.—The Book seems to be much more *popular* than I ever expected. Archdeacon Singleton finds nothing Radical in it!

J. W. C. (No room for more).

II

(To Miss Helen Welsh, Liverpool)

CHELSEA, *March* 1843

MY DEAREST HELEN,—After (in *Dumfries and Galloway-Courier* phraseology) "taking a bird's-eye view" of all modern literature, I am arrived at the conclusion that, to find a book exactly suited to my uncle's taste, I must write it myself! and, alas, that cannot be done before to-morrow morning!

La Motte Fouqué's *Magic Ring* suggests Geraldine (Jewsbury). "Too mystical! My uncle detests confusion of ideas." "Paul de Kock? *he* is very witty." "Yes, but

also very indecent; and my uncle would not relish indecencies read aloud to him by his daughters." "Oh! ah! well! Miss Austen?" "Too washy; water-gruel for mind and body at the same time were too bad." Timidly, and after a pause, "Do you think he could stand Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame*?" The idea of my uncle listening to the sentimental monstrosities of Victor Hugo! A smile of scorn was this time all my reply. But in my own suggestions I have been hardly more fortunate. All the books that pretend to amuse in our day come, in fact, either under that category, which you except against, "the extravagant, clown-jesting sort," or still worse, under that of what I should call the galvanised-death's-head-grinning sort. There seems to be no longer any genuine heart-felt mirth in writers of books; they sing and dance still *vigoureusement*, but one sees always too plainly that it is not voluntarily, but only for halfpence; and for halfpence they will crack their windpipes, and cut capers on the crown of their heads, poor men that they are!

I bethink me of one book, however, which we have lately read here, bearing a rather questionable name as a book for my uncle, but, nevertheless, I think he would like it. It is called *Passages from the Life of a Radical*, by Samuel Bamford, a silk-weaver of Middleton. He was one of those who got into trouble during the Peterloo time; and the details of what he then saw and suffered are given with a simplicity, an intelligence, and absence of everything like party violence, which it does one good to fall in with, especially in these inflated times.

There is another book that might be tried, though I am not sure that it has not a little too much affinity with water-gruel, *The Neighbours*, a domestic novel translated

from the Swedish by Mary Howitt. There is a "Little Wife" in it, with a husband, whom she calls "Bear," that one never wearies of, although they never say or do anything in the least degree extraordinary.

Geraldine strongly recommends Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia, and Petrea*, as "very interesting and very short." Also Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*. There are two novels of Paul de Kock translated into English, which might be tried at least without harm done, for they are unexceptionable in the usual sense of that term, the *Barber of Paris*, and *Sister Anne*.

I have read the last, not the first, and I dare say it would be very amusing for anyone who likes *Gil Blas* and that sort of books; for *my* taste it does not get on fast enough.

There! enough of books for one day. Thank you for your letter, dear. If I had not wee angels to write me consolatory missives at present, I should really be terribly ill off. My maid continues highly inefficient, myself ditto; the weather complicates everything; for days together not a soul comes; and then if the sun glimmers forth a whole rush of people breaks in, to the very taking away of one's breath!

Yesterday, between the hours of three and five, we had old Sterling, Mr. and Mrs. Von Glehen, Mr. and Mrs. Macready, John Carlyle, and William Cunningham. Geraldine professed to be mightily taken with Mrs. Macready; not so much so with "William." Poor dear William! I never thought him more interesting, however. To see a man who is exhibiting himself every night on a stage, blushing like a young girl in a private room, is a beautiful phenomenon for me. His wife whispered into my ear, as we sat on the sofa together, "Do you know

poor William is in a perfect agony to-day at having been brought here in that great-coat? It is a stage great-coat, but was only worn by him twice; the piece it was made for did not succeed, but it was such an expensive coat, I would not let him give it away; and doesn't he look well in it?" I wish Jeannie had seen him in the coat—magnificent fur neck and sleeves, and such frogs on the front. He did look well, but so heartily ashamed of himself.

Oh, I must tell you, for my uncle's benefit, a domestic catastrophe that occurred last week! One day, after dinner, I heard Helen lighting the fire, which had gone out, in the room above, with a perfectly unexampled vengeance; every stroke of the poker seemed an individual effort of concentrated rage. What ails the creature now? I said to myself. Who has incurred her sudden displeasure? or is it the red herring she had for dinner which has disagreed with her stomach? (for in the morning, you must know, when I was ordering the dinner, she had asked, might *she* have a red herring? "her heart had been set upon it this a good while back:" and, of course, so modest a petition received an unhesitating affirmative). On her return to the subterranean, the same hubbub wild arose from below, which had just been trying my nerves from above; and when she brought up the tea-tray, she clanked it on the lobby-table, as if she were minded to demolish the whole concern at one fell stroke. I looked into her face inquiringly as she entered the room, and seeing it black as midnight (*morally*, that is), I said very coolly, "A little less noise, if you please; you are getting rather loud upon us." She cast up her eyes with the look of a martyr at the stake, as much as to say, "Well, if I must be quiet, I must; but you little know my

wrongs." By-and-by Geraldine went to the kitchen for some reason; she is oftener in the kitchen in one day than I am in a month, but that is irrelevant. "Where is the cat?" said she to Helen; "I have not seen her all night." She takes a wonderful, most superfluous charge of the cat, as of everything else in this establishment. "The cat!" said Helen grimly, "I have all but killed her." "How?" said Geraldine. "With the besom," replied the other. "Why? for goodness' sake." "Why!" repeated Helen, bursting out into new rage; "why indeed? Because she ate my red herring! I set it all ready on the end of the dresser, and she ran away with it, and ate it every morsel to the tail—such an unheard of thing for the brute to do. Oh, if I could have got hold of her, she should not have got off with her life!" "And have you had no dinner?" asked Geraldine. "Oh yes, I had mutton enough, but I had just set my heart on a red herring." Which was the most deserving of having a besom taken to her, the cat or the woman?

My love to Babbie; her letter to-day is most comfortable. Blessings on you all.—Your affectionate cousin,

J. WELSH

III

(To T. Carlyle, Esq., at Scotsbrig)

CHELSEA, *Friday morning*, *August* 18, 1843

DEAREST,—If you expect a spirited letter from me to-day, I grieve that you will be disappointed. I am not mended yet: only mending, and that present participle (to use Helen's favourite word for the weather) is extremely "dilatory." The pains in my limbs are

gone, however, leaving only weakness; and my head aches now with "a certain" moderation!—still enough to spoil all one's enjoyment of life—if there be any such thing for some of us—and, what is more to the purpose, enough to interfere with one's "did intends," which in my case grow always the longer the more manifold and complicated.

Darwin came yesterday after my dinner-time (I had dined at three), and remarked, in the course of some speculative discourse, that I "looked as if I needed to go to Gunter's and have an ice!" Do you comprehend what sort of look that can be? Certainly he was right, for driving to Gunter's and having an ice revived me considerably: it was the first time I had felt up to crossing the threshold, since I took Bessie Mudie to the railway the same evening I returned from Ryde. Darwin was very clever yesterday: he remarked *apropos* of a pamphlet of Maurice's (which, by the way, is come for you), entitled *A Letter to Lord Ashley respecting a certain proposed measure for stifling the expression of opinion in the University of Oxford*, that pamphlets were for some men just what a fit of the gout was for others—they cleared the system, so that they could go on again pretty comfortably for a while. He told me also a curious conversation amongst three grooms, at which Wrightson had assisted the day before in a railway carriage, clearly indicating to what an alarming extent the schoolmaster is abroad! Groom the first took a pamphlet from his pocket, saying he had bought it two days ago and never found a minute to read it. Groom the second inquired the subject. First Groom: "Oh, a hit at the Puseyists." Second Groom: "The Puseyists? Ha, they are for bringing us back to the times when people burnt one another!" First Groom (tapping second groom on the shoulder with the

pamphlet): "Charity, my brother, charity!" Third Groom: "Well, I cannot say about the Puseyists; but my opinion is that what we need is more Christianity and less religionism!"

Now Wrightson swears that every word of this is literally as the men spoke it—and certainly Wrightson could not invent it.

I had a long letter from old Sterling, which stupidly I flung into the fire in a rage (The fire? Yes, it is only for the last two days that I have not needed fire in the mornings!); and I bethought me afterwards that I had better have sent it to you, whom its cool Robert Macaire impudence might have amused. Only fancy his inviting me to come back, and "this time he would take care that I should have habitable lodgings!" His letter began, "The last cord which held me to existence here is snapped,"—meaning me! and so on. Oh! "the devil fly away with" the old sentimental curmudgeon!

I had letters from both Mr. and Mrs. Buller yesterday explaining their having failed to invite me; she appears to have been worse than ever, and is likely to be soon here again. Poor old Buller's modest hope that the new medicine "may not turn madam blue" is really touching!

Here is your letter come. And you have not yet got any from me since my return! Somebody must have been very negligent, for I wrote to you on Sunday, added a postscript on Monday, and sent off both letter and newspapers by Helen, in perfectly good time. It is most provoking after one has been (as Helen says) "just most particular" not to *vaix* you, to find that you have been *vaixed* nevertheless. . . .

IV

(To T. Carlyle, Esq., Scotsbrig)

CHELSEA, *Thursday*, *September* 18, 1845

MY DEAR, . . . I have got quite over the fatigues of my journey, which had been most provokingly aggravated for me by a circumstance "which it may be interesting not to state"; the last two nights I have slept quite as well as I was doing at Seaforth. The retirement of Cheyne Row is as deep at present as anyone not absolutely a Timon of Athens could desire. "There is, in the first place" (as Mr. Paulet would say), the physical impossibility (hardly anybody being left in town), and then the weather has been so tempestuous that nobody in his senses (except Mazzini, who never reflects whether it be raining or no) would come out to make visits. He (Mazzini) came the day before yesterday, immediately on receiving notification of my advent, and his doe-skin boots were oozing out water in a manner frightful to behold. He looked much as I left him, and appeared to have made no progress of a practical sort. He told me nothing worth recording, except that he had received the other day a declaration of love. And this he told with the same *calma* and historical precision with which you might have said you had received an invitation to take the chair at a Mechanics' Institute dinner. Of course I asked "the particulars." "Why not?" and I got them fully, at the same time with brevity, and without a smile. Since the assassination affair, he had received many invitations to the house of a Jew merchant of Italian extraction, where there are several daughters—"what shall I say?—horribly ugly: that is, repugnant for me entirely." One of them is "nevertheless very strong in music," and seeing that he

admired her playing, she had "in her head confounded the playing with the player."

The last of the only two times he had availed himself of their attentions, as they sat at supper with Browning and some others, "the youngest of the horrible family" proposed to him, in *sotto voce*, that they two should drink "a goblet of wine" together, each to the person that each loved most in the world.

"I find your toast *unegoist*," said he, "and I accept it with pleasure." "But," said she, "when we have drunk, we will then tell each other to whom?" "Excuse me," said he, "we will, if you please, drink without conditions." Whereupon they drank; "and then this girl—what shall I say? bold, upon my honour—proposed to tell me to whom she had drunk, and trust to my telling her after. 'As you like.' 'Well, then, it was to you!' 'Really?' said I, surprised I must confess. 'Yes,' said she, pointing aloft, 'true as God exists.' 'Well,' said I, 'I find it strange.' 'Now, then,' said she, 'to whom did you drink?' 'Ah!' said I, 'that is another question;' and on this, that girl became ghastly pale, so that her sister called out, 'Nina! what is the matter with you?' and now, thank God, she has sailed to Aberdeen." Did you ever hear anything so distracted? enough to make one ask if R—— has not some grounds for his extraordinary ideas of English women.

The said R—— presented himself here, last night, in an interregnum of rain, and found me in my dressing-gown (after the wetting), expecting no such *Himmelssendung*. I looked as beautifully unconscious as I could of all the amazing things I had been told of him at Seaforth. He talked much of "a dreadful illness;" but looked as plump as a pincushion, and had plenty of what Mr. Paulet calls "colours in his face." He seemed less distracted than

usual, and professed to have discovered, for the first time, "the infinite blessedness of work," and also to be "making money at a great rate—paying off his debts by five or six pounds a week." I remarked that he must surely have had a prodigious amount of debt to begin with.—Kind regards to your mother and the rest. J. C.

V

(To T. Carlyle, Esq., Scotsbrig)

Tuesday, September 23, 1845

"NOTHINK" for you to-day in the shape of inclosure, unless I inclose a letter from Mrs. Paulet to myself, which you will find as "entertaining" to the full as any of mine. And *nothink* to be told either, except all about the play; and upon my honour, I do not feel as if I had a penny-a-liner genius enough, this cold morning, to make much entertainment out of that. Enough to clasp one's hands, and exclaim, like Helen before the Virgin and Child, "Oh, how expensive!" But "how did the creatures get through it?" Too well; and not well enough! The public theatre, scenes painted by Stanfield, costumes "rather exquisite," together with the certain amount of proficiency in the amateurs, overlaid all idea of private theatricals; and, considering it as public theatricals, the acting was "most insipid," not one performer among them that could be called good, and none that could be called absolutely bad. Douglas Jerrold seemed to me the best, the oddity of his appearance greatly helping him; he played Stephen the Cull, Forster as Kitely, and Dickens as Captain Bobadil, were much on a par; but Forster preserved his identity, even through his loftiest flights of Macreadyism; while poor

little Dickens, all painted in black and red, and affecting the voice of a man of six feet, would have been unrecognisable to the mother that bore him! On the whole, to get up the smallest interest in the thing, one needed to be always reminding oneself: "all these actors were once men!"[1] and will be men again tomorrow morning. The greatest wonder for me was how they had contrived to get together some six or seven hundred ladies and gentlemen (judging from the clothes) at this season of the year: and all utterly unknown to me, except some half-dozen.

So long as I kept my seat in the dress circle I recognised only Mrs. Macready (in one of the four private boxes), and in my nearer neighbourhood Sir Alexander and Lady Gordon. But in the interval betwixt the play and the farce I took a notion to make my way to Mrs. Macready. John, of course, declared the thing "clearly impossible, no use trying it;" but a servant of the theatre, overhearing our debate, politely offered to escort me where I wished; and then John, having no longer any difficulties to surmount, followed, to have his share in what advantages might accrue from the change. Passing through a long dim passage, I came on a tall man leant to the wall, with his head touching the ceiling like a caryatid, to all appearance asleep, or resolutely trying it under the most unfavourable circumstances. "Alfred Tennyson!" I exclaimed in joyful surprise. "Well!" said he, taking the hand I held out to him, and forgetting to let it go again. "I did not know you were in town," said I. "I should like to know who you are," said he; "I know that I know you, but I cannot tell your name." And I had actually

[1] Speech of a very young Wedgwood at a Woolwich review: "Ah, papa, all these soldiers were once men."—T. C.

to name myself to him. Then he woke up in good earnest, and said he had been meaning to come to Chelsea. "But Carlyle is in Scotland," I told him with humility. "So I heard from Spedding already, but I asked Spedding, would he go with me to see Mrs. Carlyle? and he said he would." I told him if he really meant to come, he had better not wait for backing, under the present circumstances; and then pursued my way back to the Macreadys' box; where I was received by William (whom I had not divined) with a "Gracious heavens!" and spontaneous dramatic start, which made me all but answer, "Gracious heavens!" and start dramatically in my turn. And then I was kissed all round by his women; and poor Nell Gwyn, Mrs. M—— G—— seemed almost pushed by the general enthusiasm on the distracted idea of kissing me also!

They would not let me return to my stupid place, but put in a third chair for me in front of their box; "and the latter end of that woman was better than the beginning." Macready was in perfect ecstasies over the "Life of Schiller," spoke of it with tears in his eyes. As "a sign of the times," I may mention that in the box opposite sat the Duke of Devonshire, with Payne Collier! Next to us were D'Orsay and "Milady!"

Between eleven and twelve it was all over—and the practical result? Eight-and-sixpence for a fly, and a headache for twenty-four hours! I went to bed as wearied as a little woman could be, and dreamt that I was plunging through a quagmire seeking some herbs which were to save the life of Mrs. Maurice; and that Maurice was waiting at home for them in an agony of impatience, while I could not get out of the mud-water!

Craik arrived next evening (Sunday), to make his

compliments. Helen had gone to visit numbers,[1] John was smoking in the kitchen. I was lying on the sofa, headachey, leaving Craik to put himself to the chief expenditure of wind, when a cab drove up. Mr. Strachey? No. Alfred Tennyson alone! Actually, by a superhuman effort of volition he had put himself into a cab, nay, brought himself away from a dinner party, and was there to smoke and talk with me!—by myself—me! But no such blessedness was in store for him. Craik prosed, and John babbled for his entertainment; and I, whom he had come to see, got scarcely any speech with him. The exertion, however, of having to provide him with tea, through my own unassisted ingenuity (Helen being gone for the evening) drove away my headache; also perhaps a little feminine vanity at having inspired such a man with the energy to take a cab on his own responsibility, and to throw himself on providence for getting away again! He stayed till eleven, Craik sitting him out, as he sat out Lady H——, and would sit out the Virgin Mary should he find her here.

What with these unfortunate mattresses (a work of necessity) and other processes almost equally indispensable, I have my hands full, and feel "worried," which is worse. I fancy my earthquake begins to "come it rather strong" for John's comfort and ease, but I cannot help that; if I do not get on with my work, such as it is, what am I here for?—Yours, J. C.

[1] No. 5, or the like, denoting maid-servants there.—T. C.

A Penny-a-Liner

VI

(To T. Carlyle, Esq., Scotsbrig)

Wednesday, October 1, 1845

WELL! now I am subsided again; set in for a quiet evening, at leisure to write, and with plenty to write about. I know not how it is, I seem to myself to be leading a most solitary, and virtuous, and eventless life here, at this dead season of the year; and yet when I sit down to write, I have so many things to tell always that I am puzzled where to begin. Decidedly, I was meant to have been a subaltern of the Daily Press —not "a penny-lady,"[1] but a penny-a-liner; for it is not only a faculty with me, but a necessity of my nature to make a great deal out of nothing.

To begin with something I have been treasuring up for a week (for I would not holloa till we were out of the wood): I have *put down the dog!*[2] "The dog! wasn't he put down at Christmas, with a hare?" It seemed so; and "we wished we might get it!" But on my return I found him in the old place, at the back of the wall, barking "like—like—anything!" "Helen!" I said, with the calmness of a great despair, "is not that the same dog?" "Deed is it!" said she, "and the whole two months you have been away, its tongue has never lain! it has driven even me almost distracted!" I said no more, but I had my own thoughts on the subject. Poison?

[1] In Scotland the "Penny Ladies" (extraneously so-called) were busy, "benevolent" persons; subscribers of a penny a week for educating, etc.: not with much success.—T. C.

[2] Oh, my heroine! Endless were her feats in regard to all this, and her gentle talents too! I could not have lived here but for that, had there been nothing more.—T. C.

a pistol bullet? the Metropolitan Police? Some way or other that dog—or I—must terminate.

Meanwhile I went on cleaning with what heart I could. "My dear! Will you hasten to the catastrophe?" I am hastening, slowly—*festina lente*. Bless your heart! "there's nothing pushing"—"the rowins[1] are a' in the loft" for this night! Well! it was the evening after John's departure.

I had been too busy all day to listen; the candles were lit, and I had set myself with my feet on the fender to enjoy the happiness of being let alone, and to—bid myself "consider." "Bow-wow-wow," roared the dog, "and dashed the cup of fame from my brow!" "Bow-wow-wow," again, and again, till the whole universe seemed turned into one great dog-kennel! I hid my face in my hands and groaned inwardly. "Oh, destiny accursed! what use of scrubbing and sorting? All this availeth me nothing, so long as the dog sitteth at the washerman's gate!" I could have burst into tears, but I did not! "I was a republican—before the Revolution; and I never wanted energy!" I ran for ink and paper, and wrote:—

"DEAR GAMBARDELLA,—You once offered to shoot some cocks for me; that service I was enabled to dispense with; but now I accept your devotion. Come, if you value my sanity, and——" But here, "a sudden thought struck me." He could not take aim at the dog without scaling the high wall, and in so doing he would certainly be seized by the police; so I threw away that first sibylline leaf, and wrote another—to the washerman! Once more I offered him "any price for that horrible dog—to hang it," offered "to settle a yearly income on

[1] "Rowins" are wool completely carded, ready for the wheel when it comes down from "the loft."—T. C.

it if it would hold its accursed tongue." I implored, threatened, imprecated, and ended by proposing that, in case he could not take an immediate final resolution, he should in the interval "make[1] the dog dead-drunk with a bottle of whiskey, which I sent for the purpose!" Helen was sent off with the note and whiskey; and I sat, all concentrated, awaiting her return, as if the fate of nations had depended on my diplomacy; and so it did, to a certain extent! Would not the inspirations of "the first man in Europe" be modified,[2] for the next six months at least, by the fact, who should come off victorious, I or the dog? Ah! it is curious to think how first men in Europe, and first women too, are acted upon by the inferior animals!

Helen came, but even before that had "the raven down of night" smoothed itself in heavenly silence!

God grant this were not mere accident; oh, no! verily it was not accident. The washerman's two daughters had seized upon and read the note; and what was death to me had been such rare amusement to them, that they "fell into fits of laughter" in the first place; and, in the second place, ran down and untied the dog, and solemnly pledged themselves that it should "never trouble me more!" At Christmas they had sent it into the country for three months "to learn to be quiet," and then chained it in the old place; now they would take some final measure. Next morning came a note from the washerman himself, written on glazed paper, with a crow-quill, apologising, promising; he could not put it away entirely; as it was "a great protection" to him, and "belonged to a relative" (who shall say where

[1] Mark, mark!—T. C.

[2] Quiz mainly this, and glad mockery of some who deserved it.—T. C.

sentiment may not exist!), but he "had untied it, and would take care it gave me no further trouble," and he "returned his grateful thanks for what 'as been sent." It is a week ago; and one may now rest satisfied that the tying up caused the whole nuisance. The dog is to be seen going about there all day in the yard, like any other Christian dog, "carrying out" your principle of silence, not merely "platonically," but practically.

Since that night, as Helen remarks, "it has not said one word!" So, "thanks God," you still have quietude to return to![1]

I took tea with Sterling on Monday night; walked there, and he sent the carriage home with me. It is very difficult to know how to do with him. He does not seem to me essentially mad; but rather mad with the apprehension of madness; a state of mind I can perfectly understand — moi. He forgets sometimes Anthony's name, for example, or mine; or how many children he has; and then he gets into a rage, that he cannot recollect; and then he stamps about, and rings the bell, and brings everybody in the house to "help him to remember"; and when all will not do, he exclaims: "I am going mad, by God!" and then he is mad, as mad as a March hare.

I can do next to nothing for him, beyond cheering him up a little, for the moment. Yesterday, again, I went a little drive with him; of course, not without Saunders as well as the coachman. He told me that when he heard I had written about him, he "cried for three days." Anthony's desertion seems the central point, around which all his hypochondriacal ideas congregate. Anthony has never written him the scrape of a pen, since he left

[1] Well do I remember that dog, behind the wall, on the other side of the street. Never heard more.—T. C.

him insensible at Manchester; nor even written about him, so far as himself or his manservant knows.

Whom else have I seen? Nobody else, I think, except Mazzini, whom I was beginning to fancy the Jewess must have made an *enlèvement* of; and *enlevé* he had been, sure enough, but not by the Jewess—by himself, and only the length of Oxford; or rather he meant to go only the length of Oxford; but, with his usual practicality, let himself be carried sixty miles further, to a place he called Swinton. Then, that the journey back might have also its share of misadventure, he was not in time to avail himself of the place he had taken, "in the second class"; but had to jump up, "quite promiscuously," beside "the conductor," where he had "all the winds of heaven blowing on him, and through him;" the result a "dreadful cold." Dreadful it must have been when it confined him to the house. Meanwhile he had had—two other declarations of love!! They begin to be as absurd as the midges in Mr. Fleming's "right eye." "What! more of them?" "Ah yes! unhappily! they begin to—to what shall I say?—rain on me like *sauterelles*!" One was from a young lady in Genoa, who sent him a bracelet of her hair (the only feature he has seen of her); and begged "to be united to him—in plotting!" "That one was good, upon my honour." "And the other?" "Ah! from a woman here, married, thanks God; though to a man fifty years more old—French, and sings—the other played, decidedly my love of music has consequences!" "And how did she set about it?" "*Franchement*; through a mutual friend; and then she sent me an invitation to supper; and I returned for answer that I was going to Oxford; where I still am, or will remain a long, long time!" *Emancipation de la femme!* we would say, it marches almost faster than intellect. And now, if there be not clatter

enough for one night, I have a great many half-moons and stars to cut in paper before I go to bed. For what purpose? That is my secret. "And you wish that you could tell!"

Good-night. *Schlaf Wohl.* J. C.

VII

(To Mrs. Russell, Thornhill)

CHELSEA, *November* 28, 1856

MY DARLING, . . . Oh, such a fright I got last Friday morning! Thursday night was my *second* night of something like human sleep. I had fallen asleep about three, and was still sleeping off and on between six and seven, when I was startled wide awake by a heavy fall in the room directly over mine (Mr. C.'s bedroom); I knew in the very act of waking, that it was no table or inanimate thing that made the sound, but a human body,—Mr. C.'s of course—the only human body there! What *could* I think but that he had got up ill, and fallen down in a fit? I threw myself out of bed, tore open my door and began to run upstairs. But my legs got paralysed; I leant against the wall and screamed. In answer to my scream, came Mr. C.'s voice, calling out quite *jolly*, "It's nothing, my Dear! Go back to your bed; it is a mistake: I will be there presently!" Back to bed I crept; and then if it had been in my constitution to take a fit of hysterics I should have taken it! As it was I lay and trembled and my teeth chattered, and when Mr. C. came and tried me with some water, I could no more swallow it than if I had taken hydrophobia. He had awoke too

early, and got up to go down stairs and smoke,[1] *his* way of invoking sleep. His room being quite dark, and thinking to put on his stockings and shoes before getting himself a light, he had gone to sit down on a chair at the bottom of his bed, where these articles are kept; but mistaking the locality, he had sat down *on nothing at all!* and fell smack his whole length on the floor,—not hurting himself in the least, for a wonder. This adventure has pretty well taken the conceit out of me on the score of courage, presence of mind, and all that! Mercy! what would have become of Dr. Russell if he had had a Wife who *stood still* and *screamed*, that time when he was so dangerously ill? . . .

Do be so good as give Mr. Dobbie[2] an emphatic kiss for me; for if Mr. C. become unendurable with his eternal "*Frederick*," I intend running away with Mr. Dobbie!—to the backwoods, or wherever he likes.—God bless you, my dear, kind, *true* woman. Give my love to your Husband.—Yours ever affectionately,

JANE CARLYLE

Have you got the new little dog? I have a whistle for him.

[1] Carlyle was not permitted to smoke in his own bedroom.

[2] The Rev. Mr. Dobbie (Mrs. Russell's Father), then in his 80th year.

VI

"RICH EYES"

Edward FitzGerald rejoices in Frederic Tennyson's great cricket match

BOULGE HALL, WOODBRIDGE, *March* 26, 1841

MY DEAR THOMPSON,—I had a long letter from Morton the other day—he is still luxuriating at Venice. Also a letter from Frederic Tennyson, who has been in Sicily, etc., and is much distracted between enjoyment of those climates and annoyance from Fleas. These two men are to be at Rome together soon; so if any one wants to go to Rome, now is a good time. I wish I was there.

F. Tennyson says that he and a party of Englishmen fought a cricket match with the crew of the *Bellerophon* on the *Parthenopæan hills* (query about the correctness of this—I quote from memory), and *sacked* the sailors by 90 runs.

Is not this pleasant?—the notion of good English blood striving in worn-out Italy. I like that such men as Frederic should be abroad: so strong, haughty and passionate. They keep up the English character abroad. . . .

Antidotes to Carlyle

Have you read poor Carlyle's raving book about heroes? Of course you have or I would ask you to buy my copy. I don't like to live with it in the house. It smoulders. He ought to be laughed at a little. But it is pleasant to retire to the *Tale of a Tub*, *Tristram Shandy*, and *Horace Walpole*, after being tossed on his canvas waves. This is blasphemy. Dibdin Pitt of the Coburg could enact one of his heroes. . . .

The Rev. Sydney Smith describes his adventures to his daughter

December 11, 1835

MY DEAREST CHILD,—Few are the adventures of a Canon travelling gently over good roads to his benefice. In my way to Reading, I had, for my companion, the Mayor of Bristol when I preached that sermon in favour of the Catholics. He recognised me, and we did very well together. I was terribly afraid that he would stop at the same inn, and that I should have the delight of his society for the evening; but he (thank God!) stopped at the Crown, as a loyal man, and I, as a rude one, went on to the Bear. Civil waiters, wax candles, and off again the next morning, with my friend and Sir W. W——, a very shrewd, clever, coarse, entertaining man, with whom I skirmished *à l'aimable* all the way to Bath. At Bath, candles still more waxen, and waiters still more profound. Being, since my travels, very much gallicised in my character, I ordered a pint of claret; I found it incomparably the best wine I ever tasted; it disappeared with a rapidity which surprises me even at this distance of time. The next morning, in the coach by eight, with a handsome valetudinarian lady,

upon whom the coach produced the same effect as a steam-packet would do. I proposed weak warm brandy and water; she thought, at first, it would produce inflammation of the stomach, but presently requested to have it warm and *not* weak, and she took it to the last drop, as I did the claret. All well here. God bless you, dearest child! Love to Holland. SYDNEY SMITH

Charles Dickens meets a small Irish boy

(To Miss Hogarth)

MORRISON'S HOTEL, DUBLIN
Wednesday, August 25, 1858

I BEGIN my letter to you to-day, though I don't know when I may send it off. We had a very good house last night. For "Little Dombey," this morning, we have an immense stall let—already more than two hundred—and people are now fighting in the agent's shop to take more. They were a highly excitable audience last night, but they certainly did not comprehend—internally and intellectually comprehend—"The Chimes" as a London audience do. I am quite sure of it. I very much doubt the Irish capacity of receiving the pathetic; but of their quickness as to the humorous there can be no doubt. I shall see how they go along with little Paul, in his death, presently.

We meant, as I said in a letter to Katie, to go to Queenstown yesterday and bask on the seashore. But there is always so much to do that we couldn't manage it after all. We expect a tremendous house to-morrow night as well as to-day. I have become a wonderful Irishman — must play an Irish part some day — and

Arthur's only relaxation is when I enact "John and the Boots," which I consequently do enact all day long. The papers are full of remarks upon my white tie, and describe it as being of enormous size, which is a wonderful delusion, because, as you very well know, it is a small tie. Generally, I am happy to report, the Emerald press is in favour of my appearance, and likes my eyes. But one gentleman comes out with a letter at Cork, wherein he says that although only forty-six I look like an old man. *He* is a rum customer, I think.

John has given it up altogether as to rivalry with the Boots, and did not come into my room this morning at all. Boots appeared triumphant and alone. He was waiting for me at the hotel-door last night. "Whaa't sart of a hoose, sur?" he asked me. "Capital." "The Lard be praised fur the 'onor o' Dooblin!"

Arthur buys bad apples in the street and brings them home and doesn't eat them, and then I am obliged to put them in the balcony because they make the room smell faint. Also he meets countrymen with honeycomb on their heads, and leads them (by the button-hole when they have one) to this gorgeous establishment, and requests the bar to buy honeycomb for his breakfast; then it stands upon the sideboard uncovered and the flies fall into it. He buys owls, too, and castles, and other horrible objects, made in bog-oak; and he is perpetually snipping pieces out of newspapers and sending them all over the world. While I am reading, he conducts the correspondence, and his great delight is to show me seventeen or eighteen letters when I come, exhausted, into the retiring-place.

Berry has not got into any particular trouble for forty-eight hours, except that he is all over boils. I have prescribed the yeast, but ineffectually. It is indeed a

sight to see him and John sitting in pay-boxes, and surveying Ireland out of pigeon-holes.

Same evening before bedtime

Everybody was at "Little Dombey" to-day, and although I had some little difficulty to work them up in consequence of the excessive crowding of the place, and the difficulty of shaking the people into their seats, the effect was unmistakable and profound. The crying was universal, and they were extraordinarily affected. There is no doubt we could stay here a week with that one reading, and fill the place every night. Hundreds of people have been there to-night, under the impression that it would come off again. It was a most decided and complete success.

Here follows a dialogue (but it requires imitation), which I had yesterday morning with a little boy of the house—landlord's son, I suppose—about Plorn's age I am sitting on the sofa writing, and find him sitting beside me.

Inimitable. Holloa, old chap.

Young Ireland. Hal-loo!

Inimitable (*in his delightful way*). What a nice old fellow you are. I am very fond of little boys.

Young Ireland. Air yer? Ye'r right.

Inimitable. What do you learn, old fellow?

Young Ireland (*very intent on Inimitable, and always childish, except in his brogue*). I lairn wureds of three sillibils, and wureds of two sillibils, and wureds of one sillibil.

Inimitable (*gaily*). Get out, you humbug! You learn only words of one syllable.

Young Ireland (*laughs heartily*). You may say that it is mostly wureds of one sillibil.

Inimitable. Can you write?

Young Ireland. Not yet. Things comes by deegrays.

Inimitable. Can you cipher?

Young Ireland (very quickly). Wha'at's that?

Inimitable. Can you make figures?

Young Ireland. I can make a nought, which is not asy, being roond.

Inimitable. I say, old boy, wasn't it you I saw on Sunday morning in the hall, in a soldier's cap? You know—in a soldier's cap?

Young Ireland (*cogitating deeply*). Was it a very good cap?

Inimitable. Yes.

Young Ireland. Did it fit unkommon?

Inimitable. Yes.

Young Ireland. Dat was me!

There are two stupid old louts at the room, to show people into their places, whom John calls "them two old Paddies," and of whom he says, that he "never see nothing like them (snigger) hold idiots" (snigger). They bow and walk backwards before the grandees, and our men hustle them while they are doing it.

We walked out last night, with the intention of going to the theatre; but the Piccolomini Establishment (they were doing the *Lucia*) looked so horribly like a very bad jail, and the Queen's looked so blackguardly, that we came back again, and went to bed. I seem to be always either in a railway carriage, or reading, or going to bed. I get so knocked up, whenever I have a minute to remember it, that then I go to bed as a matter of course. I am looking forward to the last Irish reading on Thursday, with great impatience. But when we shall have turned this week, once knocked off Belfast, I shall see

land, and shall (like poor Timber in the days of old) "keep up a good heart."

Ever, my dearest Georgy, most affectionately.

Shirley Brooks extols Cornwall to Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A.

ESPLANADE, PENZANCE
Saturday, September 21, 1867

MY DEAR COTTLE,—"Behold 'em 'ere!" "'Ere" is not Penzance, but Ilfracombe, Devonshire. The above represents feebly (I am now critical in art, for I have got the very house occupied last year by Tom Taylor) the stunning hotel at Penzance where we were exceedingly comfortable for some days, and whence we made "excrescences" to the Land's End and other wonderful works of nature. "It is a holy thing," said Mr. Squeers, "to be in a state of nature."

This reminds me that we went down a copper mine, half a mile under the sea, by a wire rope tied to a car about as big as a coal-scuttle—a sensation!—but a previous sensation was reading in the guide-book, "Before descending you must divest yourself of every article of apparel, and——" Here I closed the book, and put it away as S—b—ian; but learning that you could compromise by taking off your coat and tucking up your trousers, and putting on a miner's dress, white, splashed with yellow mud, I reconsidered the subject. You should have seen Mrs. Shirley in a long white thing like a vast nightgown, and with a thick yellow dreadnought! But she did the perilous descent gallantly, commending her soul to the supreme powers, and the splashes through the crevices to the devil (I believe).

The Duke of Cornwall, Plymouth, is a splendid new

hotel, with all the comforts, and close to the train. We did all the sights, including the Breakwater, which is not worth doing. But the coast scenery of both Cornwall and Devon is glorious. Very likely I am telling you what you know, for Reynolds was born in Devonshire, and you might have been born anywhere you chose. We have done an awful lot, and I am glad to have got to a resting-place for a week in this love-ley place. We are on the top of a high hill, and see Lundy Isle, Wales, Jerusalem, and Madagascar; and to-day we are going to have squab-pie and junket.

From Du Maurier I glean that you are all a happy colony; and I hope to see you after we get back. At Helston there were two pictures, regarded as household treasures. One was "Coming of Age," and the other the "Sports in the Olden Time." I obtained much *kudos* by saying that I knew the painter—that I had stood for the young heir; and the grandad in the other was Spurgeon, to whom *I* had introduced you when you persuaded him to sit to you. This will become a Cornish legend. At Plymouth Station there is a three-legged cat, —not a Manx cat (good), but one whose leg was cut off by a railway-engine. This is the most remarkable thing I have seen, except the Devil's Bellows at Kinance Bay, which is more remarkable; but I do not know why.

I have had my hair cut by a barber called Petherwick Peninluma, and I have had my old shoes mended for 1s. 9d. and they are more comfortable than my new ones, which cost a guinea. Such, my Cottle, is a lesson that should teach us, how little real value there is in money, on which, moreover, Providence sets no store, or He would not bestow it on the unworthy, like —— ; but no matter, I am in charity with all mankind. My address is 5, Castle Terrace, Ilfracombe. Give us a hail! My

wife says I have taken her "out of the world." She eats well, however, for an angel.—Ever faithfully yours,

SHIRLEY BROOKS

I made a good joke. We had struggled up a steep mountain, and I rested at a tree, and asked "why it was like a hospital counterpane." They gave it up with abuse. "Because it's on the top of the 'ill." Wit, you see, does not depend upon locality.

Charles Lamb at the Lakes

LONDON, *September* 24, 1802

MY DEAR MANNING,—Since the date of my last letter I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly never intend to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed Peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice; for my time being precious did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show

us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, etc. etc. We thought we had got into fairyland. But that went off (as it never came again —while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, etc. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half-bed, etc. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London and passed much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater—I forget

the name—to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about, and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks —I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than among Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year—two, three years—among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-Street at the

end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think : *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning ; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, the glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant !—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms ? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying ? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard ; but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion (that has been : *nam hic cæstus artemque repono*), is turned editor of a "Naval Chronicle." Godwin (with a pitiful artificial wife) continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That Bitch has detached Marshall from his house, Marshall the man who went to sleep when the *Ancient Mariner* was reading : the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. How I hate *this part* of a letter. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference ; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted etc.

I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow. C. LAMB

Oliver Goldsmith instructs his Uncle Contarine in Dutch manners

LEYDEN [1754]

DEAR SIR,—I suppose by this time I am accused of either neglect or ingratitude, and my silence imputed to my usual slowness of writing. But believe me, Sir, when I say, that till now I had not an opportunity of sitting down with that ease of mind which writing required. You may see by the top of the letter that I am at Leyden; but of my journey hither you must be informed. Some time after the receipt of your last, I embarked for Bordeaux, on board a Scotch ship called the *St. Andrews*, Capt. John Wall, master. The ship made a tolerable appearance, and as another inducement, I was let to know that six agreeable passengers were to be my company. Well, we were but two days at sea when a storm drove us into a city of England called Newcastle-on-Tyne. We all went ashore to refresh us after the fatigue of our voyage. Seven men and I were one day on shore, and on the following evening as we were all very merry, the room door bursts open: enters a sergeant and twelve grenadiers with their bayonets screwed; and puts all under king's arrest. It seems my company were Scotchmen in the French service, and had been in Scotland to enlist soldiers for the French army. I endeavoured all I

could to prove my innocence; however, I remained in prison with the rest a fortnight, and with difficulty got off even then. Dear Sir, keep this all a secret, or at least say it was for debt; for if it were once known at the University, I should hardly get a degree. But hear how Providence interposed in my favour; the ship was gone on to Bordeaux before I got from prison, and was wrecked at the mouth of the Garonne, and every one of the crew were drowned. It happened the last great storm. There was a ship at that time ready for Holland. I embarked, and in nine days, thank my God, I arrived safe at Rotterdam; whence I travelled by land to Leyden; and whence I now write.

You may expect some account of this country, and though I am not well qualified for such an undertaking, yet shall I endeavour to satisfy some part of your expectations. Nothing surprises me more than the books every day published, descriptive of the manners of this country. Any young man who takes it into his head to publish his travels, visits the countries he intends to describe; passes through them with as much inattention as his *valet de chambre*; and consequently not having a fund himself to fill a volume, he applies to those who wrote before him, and gives us the manners of a country, not as he must have seen them, but such as they might have been fifty years before. The modern Dutchman is quite a different creature from him of former times; he in everything imitates a Frenchman, but in his easy disengaged air, which is the result of keeping polite company. The Dutchman is vastly ceremonious, and is perhaps exactly what a Frenchman might have been in the reign of Louis XIV. Such are the better bred. But the downright Hollander is one of the oddest figures in nature. Upon a head of lank

hair he wears a half-cocked narrow hat laced with black ribbon: no coat, but seven waistcoats, and nine pairs of breeches; so that his hips reach almost up to his arm-pits. This well-clothed vegetable is now fit to see company, or make love. But what a pleasing creature is the object of his appetite? Why, she wears a large fur cap with a deal of Flanders lace: for every pair of breeches he carries, she puts on two petticoats.

A Dutch lady burns nothing about her phlegmatic admirer but his tobacco. You must know, Sir, every woman carries in her hand a stove with cones in it, which, when she sits, she snugs under her petticoats; and at this chimney dozing Strephon lights his pipe.

I take it that this continual smoking is what gives the man the ruddy healthful complexion, by drawing his superfluous moisture, while the woman, deprived of this amusement, overflows with such viscidities as tint the complexion, and give that paleness of visage which low fenny grounds and moist air conspire to cause. A Dutch woman and Scotch will well bear an opposition.

The one pale and fat, the other lean and ruddy: the one walks as if she were straddling after a go-cart, and the other takes too masculine a stride. I shall not endeavour to deprive either country of its share of beauty; but must say, that of all objects on earth, an English farmer's daughter is most charming. Every woman there is a complete beauty, while the higher class of women want many of the requisites to make them even tolerable. Their pleasures here are very dull, though very various. You may smoke, you may doze; you may go to the Italian Comedy, as good an amusement as either of the former. This entertainment always brings in Harlequin, who is generally a magician, and in consequence of his diabolical art performs a

thousand tricks on the credulity of the persons of the Drama, who are all fools. I have seen the pit in a roar of laughter at this humour, when with his sword he touches the glass from which another was drinking. It was not his face they laughed at, for that was masked. They must have seen something vastly queer in the wooden sword, that neither I, nor you, Sir, were you there, could see.

In winter, when their canals are frozen, every house is forsaken, and all people are on the ice; sleds drawn by horses, and skating, are at that time the reigning amusements.

They have boats here that slide on the ice, and are driven by the winds. When they spread all their sails they go more than a mile and a half a minute, and their motion is so rapid the eye can hardly accompany them. Their ordinary manner of travelling is very cheap and very convenient: they sail in covered boats drawn by horses; and in these you are sure to meet people of all nations. Here the Dutch slumber, the French chatter, and the English play at cards. Any man who likes company may have them to his taste. For my part I generally detached myself from all society, and was wholly taken up in observing the face of the country. Nothing can equal its beauty; wherever I turn my eye, fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottos, vistas, presented themselves; but when you enter their towns you are charmed beyond description. No misery is to be seen here; every one is usefully employed.

Scotland and this country bear the highest contrast. There hills and rocks intercept every prospect: here 'tis all continued plain. There you might see a well dressed duchess issuing from a dirty close; and here a dirty Dutchman inhabiting a palace. The Scotch

may be compared to a tulip planted in dung ; but I never see a Dutchman in his own house but I think of a magnificent Egyptian temple dedicated to an ox. Physic is by no means taught here so well as in Edinburgh ; and in all Leyden there are but four British students, owing to all necessaries being so extremely dear, and the professors so very lazy (the chemical professor excepted,) that we don't much care to come hither. I am not certain how long my stay here may be ; however I expect to have the happiness of seeing you at Kilmore, if I can, next March.

Direct to me, if I am honoured with a letter from you, to Madame Diallion's at Leyden.

Thou best of men, may Heaven guard and preserve you, and those you love. OLIVER GOLDSMITH

John Keats describes Winchester

WINCHESTER, *September* 22, 1819

MY DEAR REYNOLDS, — I was very glad to hear from Woodhouse that you would meet in the country. I hope you will pass some pleasant time together. Which I wish to make pleasanter by a brace of letters, very highly to be estimated, as really I have had very bad luck with this sort of game this season. I "kepen in solitarinesse," for Brown has gone a-visiting. I am surprised myself at the pleasure I live alone in. I can give you no news of the place here, or any other idea of it but what I have to this effect written to George.

Yesterday I say to him was a grand day for Winchester. They elected a Mayor. It was indeed high time the place should receive some sort of excitement.

There was nothing going on : all asleep : not an old

maid's sedan returning from a card-party : and if any old women got tipsy at Christenings they did not expose it in the streets. The first night tho' of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about ten o' the Clock.

We heard distinctly a noise patting down the High Street as of a walking cane of the good old Dowager breed ; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe, " What a noise the ferril made—it must be loose."

Brown wanted to call the constables, but I observed it was only a little breeze, and would soon pass over.

The side streets here are excessively maiden-ladylike : the door-steps always fresh from the flannel.

The knockers have a staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of Lions' and Rams' heads.

The doors are most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that in Winchester a man may very quietly shut himself out of his own house. How beautiful the season is now—How fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never liked stubble-field so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm.

This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it. I hope you are better employed than in gaping after weather. I have been at different times so happy as not to know what weather it was—No, I will not copy a parcel of verses.

I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer—'tis genuine English Idiom in English words.

The Prettiest "Ees"

I have given up *Hyperion* — there were too many Miltonic inversions in it — Miltonic verse cannot be written, but in an artful, or rather, artist's humour.

I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from *Hyperion*, and put a mark + to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling.

Upon my soul 'twas imagination—I cannot make the distinction—Every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation—But I cannot make the division properly. . . .

I shall beg leave to have a third opinion in the first discussion you have with Woodhouse—just half-way, between both. You know I will not give up my argument—In my walk to-day I stoop'd under a railing that lay across my path, and asked myself, "Why I did not get over?" "Because," answered I, "no one wanted to force you under."

I would give a guinea to be a reasonable man—good sound sense—a says what he thinks and does what he says man—and did not take snuff. They say men near death, however mad they may have been, come to their senses. I hope I shall here, in this letter; there is a decent space to be very sensible in; many a good proverb has been in less—nay, I have heard of the statutes at large being changed into the statutes at small and printed for a watch paper. Your sisters, by this time, must have got the Devonshire "ees"—short ees, you know 'em—they are the prettiest ees in the language. O, how I admire the middle-sized, delicate, Devonshire girls of about fifteen. There was one at an inn door holding a quartern of brandy—the very thought of her kept me warm a whole stage—and a sixteen-miler too. "You'll pardon me for being jocular."—Ever your affectionate friend,

JOHN KEATS

Helvellyn and Lodore

John Keats and Charles Brown discover Scotland

I

(To Thomas Keats)

KESWICK, *June* 29, 1818

MY DEAR TOM,—I cannot make my journal as distinct and actual as I could wish, from having been engaged in writing to George, and therefore I must tell you, without circumstance, that we proceeded from Ambleside to Rydal, saw the waterfalls there, and called on Wordsworth who was not at home, nor was any one of his family. I wrote a note and left it on the mantel-piece.

Thence on we came to the foot of Helvellyn, where we slept, but could not ascend it for the mist.

I must mention that from Rydal we passed Thirlswater, and a fine pass in the Mountains—from Helvellyn we came to Keswick on Derwent Water. The approach to Derwent Water surpassed Windermere—it is richly wooded, and shut in with rich-toned mountains.

From Helvellyn to Keswick was eight miles to breakfast, after which we took a complete circuit of the Lake, going about ten miles, and seeing on our way the Fall of Lowdore.

I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of Rocks, and should have got I think to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one leg into a squashy hole.

There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out from a cleft in perpendicular Rocks, all fledged with ash and other beautiful trees. It is a strange thing how they got there. At the south end of the Lake the Mountains of Borrowdale are perhaps as fine as anything we have seen.

On our return from this circuit we ordered dinner, and set forth about a mile and a half on the Penrith road, to see the Druid temple. We had a fag up hill, rather too near dinner-time, which was rendered void by the gratification of seeing those aged stones on a gentle rise in the midst of the Mountains, which at that time darkened all around, except at the fresh opening of the Vale of St. John. We went to bed rather fatigued, but not so much so as to hinder us getting up this morning to Mount Skiddaw.

It promised all along to be fair, and we had fagged and tugged nearly to the top, when, at half-past six, there came a Mist upon us, and shut out the view.

We did not, however, lose anything by it; we were high enough without mist to see the coast of Scotland—the Irish Sea—the hills beyond Lancaster—and nearly all the large ones of Cumberland and Westmoreland, particularly Helvellyn and Scawfell.

It grew colder and colder as we ascended, and we were glad, at about three parts of the way, to taste a little rum which the Guide brought with him, mixed, mind ye, with Mountain water.

I took two glasses going and one returning. It is about six miles from where I am writing to the top. So we have walked ten miles before breakfast to-day. We went up with two others, very good sort of fellows. All felt, on arising into the cold air, that same elevation which a cold bath gives one—I felt as if I were going to a Tournament.

Wordsworth's house is situated just on the rise of the foot of Mount Rydal; his parlour-window looks directly down Windermere. I do not think I told you how fine the Vale of Grasmere is, and how I discovered "the ancient woman seated on Helm Crag." We shall pro-

ceed immediately to Carlisle, intending to enter Scotland on the 1st of July *vid* ——.

July 1, 1818. — We are this morning at Carlisle. After Skiddaw, we walked to Ireby, the oldest market town in Cumberland, where we were greatly amused by a country dancing-school holden at the Tun, it was indeed "no new cotillion fresh from France." No, they kickit and jumpit with mettle extraordinary, and whiskit and friskit, and toed it, and go'd it, and twirl'd it, and whirl'd it, and stamped it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad. The difference between our country dances and these Scottish figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup o' Tea and beating up a batter-pudding.

I was extremely gratified to think that, if I had pleasures they knew nothing of, they had also some into which I could not possibly enter.

I hope I shall not return without having got the Highland fling.

There was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw; some beautiful faces, and one exquisite mouth.

I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier.

This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs; we are mere creatures of Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains. Our yesterday's journey was from Ireby to Wigton, and from Wigton to Carlisle.

The Cathedral does not appear very fine—the Castle is very ancient, and of brick. The City is very various—old white-washed narrow streets—broad red-brick ones more modern—I will tell you anon whether the inside of the cathedral is worth looking at.

It is built of sandy red stone or Brick.

We have now walked 114 miles, and are merely a little tired in the thighs and a little blistered.

We shall ride 38 miles to Dumfries, when we shall linger awhile about Nithsdale and Galloway. I have written two letters to Liverpool. I found a letter from sister George; very delightful indeed: I shall preserve it in the bottom of my knapsack for you.

The town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
The Clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,
Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,
I dreamed, long ago, now new begun,
The short-liv'd, paly summer is but won
From winter's ague, for one hour's gleam;
Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam:
All is cold Beauty; pain is never done:
For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
The real of beauty, free from that dead hue,
Sickly imagination, and sick pride,
Cast wan upon it! Burns! with honour due,
I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow, hide
Thy face; I sin against thy native skies.

July 2, 1818.—You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the Churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him.

Mrs. Burns lives in this place; most likely we shall see her to-morrow. This sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half-asleep. I know not how it is, the clouds, the sky, the houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish. I will endeavour to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch.

In Devonshire they say, "Well, where be ye going?" Here it is, "How is it wi' yoursel'?" A man on the

Coach said the horses took a Hellish heap o' drivin'; the same fellow pointed out Burns's tomb with a deal of life—"There! de ye see it, amang the trees—white, wi' a roond tap?" The first well-dressed Scotchman we had any conversation with, to our surprise, confessed himself a Deist. The careful manner of delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing.

Yesterday was an immense horse-fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road; the women nearly all barefoot, with their shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the towns.

There are plenty of wretched cottages whose smoke has no outlet but by the door. We have now begun upon Whisky, called here "whuskey,"—very smart stuff it is. Mixed like our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns.

II

MAYBOLE, *July* 11, 1818

MY DEAR REYNOLDS,—We were talking on different and indifferent things when, on a sudden, we turned a corner upon the immediate country of Ayr—the sight was as rich as possible.

I had no Conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful—the idea I had was more desolate, his "Rigs of Barley" seemed always to me but a few strips of Green on a cold hill—O prejudice! it was as rich as Devon—I endeavoured to drink in the Prospect, that I might spin it out to you, as the Silkworm makes silk from Mulberry leaves—I cannot recollect it. Besides all the Beauty, there were the mountains of Arran Isle,

black and huge over the sea. We came down upon everything suddenly—there were in our way the "Bonny Doon," with the Brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon; surrounded by every Phantasy of green in Tree, Meadow, and Hill,—the stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees "from head to foot"—you know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening—there was one stretching along behind the trees.

I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg-shell for Melancholy, and as for Merriment a Witty humour will turn anything to Account. My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our Moments—that I can get into no settled strain in my Letters. My Wig! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Floodgate in the office—O Scenery, that thou shouldst be crushed between two Puns!

As for them I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch Region—I hope Brown does not put them punctually in his journal—if he does I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter.

We went to Kirk Alloway—"a Prophet is no Prophet in his own Country." We went to the Cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them.

The Man at the Cottage was a great Bore with his Anecdotes—I hate the rascal—his life consists of fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the Quarter

and twelve for the hour—he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself "a curious old Bitch"—but he is a flat old dog—I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. O the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! cant! cant!

It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache. Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity: the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet.

My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself.

One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country. His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill. I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care — to write a merry sonnet; it won't do — he talked with Bitches—he drank with blackguards, he was miserable. We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a Man, his whole life, as if we were God's spies. What were his addresses to Jean in the latter part of his life? I should not speak so to you—yet why not—you are not in the same case—you are in the right path, and you shall not be deceived.

I have spoken to you against Marriage, but it was general; the Prospect in those matters has been so blank, that I have not been unwilling to die—I would not now, for I have inducements to Life—I must see my little Nephews in America, and I must see you marry your lovely Wife. My sensations are sometimes deadened

for weeks together — but believe me I have more than once yearned for the time of your happiness to come, as much as I could for myself after the lips of Juliet.

From the tenor of my occasional rhodomontade in chit-chat, you might have been deceived concerning me on these points—upon my soul, I have been getting more and more close to you, every day, ever since I knew you, and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy Marriage—the more, since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister in law. I did not think it possible to become so much attached in so short a time.

Things like these, and they are real, have made me resolve to have a care of my health—you must be as careful.

The rain has stopped us to-day at the end of a dozen miles, yet we hope to see Loch Lomond the day after to-morrow ;—I will piddle out my information, as Rice says, next winter, at any time when a substitute is wanted for Vingt-un.

We bear the fatigue very well—twenty miles a day in general.

A cloud came over us in getting up Skiddaw—I hope to be more lucky in Ben Lomond—and more lucky still in Ben Nevis.

What I think you would enjoy is poking about Ruins, sometimes Abbey, sometimes Castle.

The short stay we made in Ireland has left few remembrances — but an old woman in a dog-kennel Sedan with a pipe in her Mouth, is what I can never forget—I wish I may be able to give you an idea of her. Remember me to your Mother and Sisters, and tell your Mother how I hope she will pardon me for having a scrap of paper pasted in the Book sent to her.

I was driven on all sides and had not time to call on Taylor. So Bailey is coming to Cumberland—Well, if you'll let me know where at Inverness, I will call on my return and pass a little time with him. I am glad 'tis not Scotland.

Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is, drink their healths in Toddy. Perhaps I may have some lines by and by to send you fresh, on your own Letter—Tom has a few to show you.—Your affectionate friend,

JOHN KEATS

Edward FitzGerald on Bedfordshire and the Irish

BOULGE HALL, *August* 14, 1839

MY DEAR POLLOCK,—I came here only yesterday, and your letter was brought up into my bedroom only this morning. What are you doing at Blinfield? rusticating there for fun with your family, or are there Assizes at such a place? And is the juvenile party you speak of assisting at, one of juvenile depredators? Well, I have been in my dear old Bedfordshire ever since I saw you: lounging in the country, lying on the banks of the Ouse, smoking, eating copious teas (prefaced with beer) in the country pot-houses, and have come mourning here: finding an empty house when I expected a full one, and no river Ouse, and no jolly boy to whistle the time away with. Such are the little disasters and miseries under which I labour: quite enough, however, to make one wish to kill oneself at times.

This all comes of having no occupation or sticking-point: so one's thoughts go floating about in a gossamer way. At least this is what I hear on all sides. So

you are going with Monteith's party to Ireland. Well, I think you will have a pleasant trip.

I think I shall probably be in Ireland all September, but far away from your doings.

Not to mention that I shall be on shore and you at sea.

You will go and see the North Coast, which I am anxious to see, and shall not unlikely go too, about the time of the equinoctial gales, when such places should be seen. I love Ireland very much, I don't know why: the country and the people and all are very homogeneous; mournful and humorous somehow: just like their natural music.

Some of Tommy Moore's Irish Ballads (the airs, I mean) are the spirits of the Waterford women made music of. You should see them, Pollock, on a Sunday, as they come from Chapel in their long, blue cloaks. Don't you think that blue eyes and black hair, and especially with long, black eyelashes, have a mystery about them?

This day week a dozen poor fellows who had walked all the way from the county Mayo into Bedfordshire, came up to the door of the Inn where we were fishing, and called for small beer. We made their hearts merry with good ale; and they went off flourishing their sticks, hoping all things, enduring all things, and singing some loose things.

You must contrive to see something of the people when you go to Ireland: I think that is the great part of the fun. You should certainly go some miles in or on an Irish Stage Coach, and also on a jaunting Car. I never saw Wimpole near Cambridge until the other day when I passed it on my way from Bedfordshire Did you ever go and see it? People always told me it was not worth seeing: which is another reason for

believing nothing people tell one : it is a very noble old Queen Anne's building of red brick, in the way of Hampton Court (not half so fine, but something in that way), looking down two miles of green sward as broad as itself, skirted on each side with fine elms. I did not go inside, but I believe the pictures are well worth seeing. Houses of that style have far more mark and character than Woburn and the modern bastard Grecian. I see they have built a new chapel at Barnwell—of red brick and very well done. I should think Peacock must have done it.

Fancy his being Dean of Barnwell. Cambridge looked very ghastly, and the hard-reading, pale, dwindled students walking along the Observatory road looked as if they were only fit to have their necks wrung. I scorn my nerveless carcase more and more every day—but there's no good in talking.

Farewell, my dear Pollock; I know this is a very worthless letter: but it is very good of you to write, and I have nothing better to do to-day than to write ever such vapid stuff.

I would ask you if Spedding were still in London, if your Yes or No (never very clamorously uttered by you) could reach me from Binfield. But even then I should not be much the better for the Information.

Lord Byron informs Mr. Hodgson of his daily routine

LISBON, *July* 16, 1809

THUS far have we pursued our route, and seen all sorts of marvellous sights, palaces, convents, etc.,—which, being to be heard in my friend Hobhouse's forth-

coming *Book of Travels*, I shall not anticipate by smuggling any account whatsoever to you in a private and clandestine manner. I must just observe, that the village of Cintra in Estremadura is the most beautiful, perhaps, in the world.

I am very happy here, because I love oranges, and talk bad Latin to the monks, who understand it, as it is like their own, and I goes into society (with my pocket pistols), and I swims in the Tagus all across at once, and I rides on an ass or a mule, and swears Portuguese, and have got a diarrhœa and bites from the mosquitoes. But what of that? Comfort must not be expected by folks that go a-pleasuring. When the Portuguese are pertinacious, I say "Carracho!"—the great oath of the Grandees, that very well supplies the place of "Damme!" —and when dissatisfied with my neighbour, I pronounce him "Ambra di merdo." With these two phrases and a third, "Avra bouro," which signifies, "Get an ass," I am universally understood to be a person of degree and a master of languages. How merrily we lives that travellers be!—if we had food and raiment. But, in sober sadness, anything is better than England, and I am infinitely amused with my pilgrimage, as far as it has gone.

To-morrow we start to ride post near 400 miles as far as Gibraltar, where we embark for Melita and Byzantium. A letter to Malta will find me, or to be forwarded, if I am absent. Pray embrace the Drury and Dwyer, and all the Ephesians you encounter. I am writing with Butler's donative pencil, which makes my bad hand worse. Excuse illegibility.

Hodgson! send me the news, and the deaths and defeats, and capital crimes, and the misfortunes of one's friends; and let us hear of literary matters, and the

controversies and the criticisms. All this will be pleasant—"Suave, mari magno, etc." Talking of that, I have been sea-sick, and sick of the sea. Adieu.—Yours faithfully, etc.

Shelley in the Coliseum

(To Thomas Love Peacock)

NAPLES, *December* 22, 1818

SINCE I last wrote to you, I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have experienced in my travels. We stayed there only a week, intending to return at the end of February, and devote two or three months to its mines of inexhaustible contemplation, to which period I refer you for a minute account of it. We visited the Forum and the ruins of the Coliseum every day. The Coliseum is unlike any work of human hands I ever saw before. It is of enormous height and circuit, and arches built of massy stones are piled on one another, and jut into the blue air shattered into the forms of overhanging rocks. It has been changed by time into the image of an amphitheatre of rocky hills overgrown by the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, and threaded by little paths which wind among its ruined stairs and immeasurable galleries; the copse-wood overshadows you as you wander through its labyrinths, and the wild weeds of this climate of flowers bloom under your feet. The arena is covered with grass, and pierces, like the skirts of a natural plain, the chasms of the broken arches around. But a small part of the exterior circumference

remains; it is exquisitely light and beautiful, and the effect of the perfection of its architecture, adorned with ranges of Corinthian pilasters, supporting a bold cornice, is such as to diminish the effect of its greatness. The interior is all ruin. I can scarcely believe that when encrusted with Dorian marble and ornamented by columns of Egyptian granite, its effect could have been so sublime and so impressive as in its present state. It is open to the sky, and it was the clear and sunny weather of the end of November in this climate when we visited it, day after day.

Near it is the Arch of Constantine, or rather the Arch of Trajan; for the servile and avaricious senate of degraded Rome ordered that the monument of his predecessor should be demolished in order to dedicate one to the Christian reptile, who had crept among the blood of his murdered family to the supreme power. It is exquisitely beautiful and perfect. The Forum is a plain in the midst of Rome, a kind of desert full of heaps of stones and pits, and though so near the habitations of men, is the most desolate place you can conceive. The ruins of temples stand in and around it, shattered columns and ranges of others complete, supporting cornices of exquisite workmanship, and vast vaults of shattered domes distinct with regular compartments, once filled with sculptures of ivory or brass. The temples of Jupiter, and Concord, and Peace, and the Sun, and the Moon, and Vesta, are all within a short distance of this spot. Behold the wrecks of what a great nation once dedicated to the abstractions of the mind! Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity. In Rome, at least

in the first enthusiasm of your recognition of ancient time, you see nothing of the Italians. The nature of the city assists the delusion, for its vast and antique walls describe a circumference of sixteen miles, and thus the population is thinly scattered over this space, nearly as great as London. Wide wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, which overhangs the Tiber. The gardens of the modern palaces are like wild woods of cedar and cypress and pine, and the neglected walks are overgrown with weeds. The English burying place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion.

Thomas Gray extols Kent

(To the Rev. Norton Nicholls)

PEMBROKE HALL, *August* 26, 1766

DEAR SIR,—It is long since that I heard you were gone in haste into Yorkshire on account of your mother's illness ; and the same letter informed me that she was recovered ; otherwise I had then wrote to you,

only to beg you would take care of her, and to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life, one never can have any more than a single mother. You may think this is obvious, and (what you call) a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was at the same age (very near) as wise as you, and yet I never discovered this (with full evidence and conviction, I mean), till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago, and seems but yesterday; and every day I live, it sinks deeper into my heart. Many a corollary could I draw from this axiom for your use (not for my own), but I will leave you the merit of doing it yourself. Pray tell me how your own health is. I conclude it perfect, as I hear you offered yourself for a guide to Mr. Palgrave into the Sierra-Morena of Yorkshire. For me, I passed the end of May and all June in Kent, not disagreeably; the country is all a garden, gay, rich, and fruitful, and (from the rainy season) had preserved, till I left it, all that emerald verdure, which commonly one only sees for the first fortnight of the spring. In the west part of it, from every eminence, the eye catches some long, winding reach of the Thames or Medway, with all their navigation; in the east, the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails and glittering blue expanse with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and corn. This last sentence is so fine, I am quite ashamed; but, no matter! you must translate it into prose. Palgrave, if he heard it, would cover his face with his pudding sleeve. I went to Margate for a day; one would think it was Bartholomew Fair that had *flown* down from Smithfield to Kent in the London Machine, like my Lady Stuffdamask (to be sure you have read the *New Bath Guide*, the most fashionable of books); so then I did *not* go to Kingsgate, because it belonged to

my Lord Holland, but to Ramsgate I did; and so to Sandwich, and Deal, and Dover, and Folkestone, and Hythe, all along the coast, very delightful. I do not tell you of the great and small beasts, and creeping things innumerable, that I met with, because you do not suspect that this world is inhabited by anything but men and women and clergy, and such two-legged cattle. Now I am here again, very disconsolate, and all alone, even Mr. Brown is gone; and the cares of this world are coming thick upon me; I do not mean children. You, I hope, are better off, riding and walking in the woods of Studley with Mr. Aislaby, singing duets with my cousin Fanny, improving with Mr. Weddell, conversing with Mr. Harry Duncomb. I must not wish for you here; besides, I am going to town at Michaelmas, by no means for amusement. Do you remember how we are to go into Wales next year? Well!—Adieu, I am sincerely yours, T. G.

P.S.—Pray how does poor Temple find himself in his new situation? Is Lord Lisburne as good as his letters were? What is come of the father and brother? Have you seen Mason?

The Lambs at Cambridge

(To Sarah Hutchinson)

I

Dated at end: August 20, 1815

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is less fatigue to me to write upon lines, and I want to fill up as much of my paper as I can, in gratitude for the pleasure your very kind letter has given me. I began to think I should not hear

from you ; knowing you were not fond of letter-writing, I quite forgave you, but I was very sorry. Do not make a point of conscience of it, but if ever you feel an inclination, you cannot think how much a few lines would delight me. I am happy to hear so good an account of your sister and child, and sincerely wish her a perfect recovery. I am glad you did not arrive sooner, you escaped much anxiety. I have just received a very cheerful letter from Mrs. Morgan—the following I have picked out as I think it will interest you. "Hartley Coleridge has been with us for two months. Morgan invited him to pass the long vacation here in the hope that his father would be of great service to him in his studies: he seems to be extremely amiable. I believe he is to spend the next vacation at Lady Beaumont's. Your old friend Coleridge is very hard at work at the preface to a new Edition which he is just going to publish in the same form as Mr. Wordsworth's—at first the preface was not to exceed five or six pages, it has however grown into a work of great importance. I believe Morgan has already written nearly two hundred pages. The title of it is *Autobiographia Literaria*: to which are added *Sybilline Leaves*, a collection of Poems by the same author. Calne has lately been much enlivened by an excellent company of players—last week they performed the 'Remorse' to a very crowded and brilliant audience ; two of the characters were admirably well supported ; at the request of the actors Morgan was behind the scenes all the time, and assisted in the music, etc."

Thanks to your kind interference, we have had a very nice letter from Mr. Wordsworth. Of them and of you we think and talk quite with a painful regret that we did not see more of you, and that it may be so long before we meet again.

I am going to do a queer thing—I have wearied myself with writing a long letter to Mrs. Morgan, a part of which is an incoherent rambling account of a jaunt we have just been taking. I want to tell you all about it, for we so seldom do such things that it runs strangely in my head, and I feel too tired to give you other than the mere copy of the nonsense I have just been writing.

"Last Saturday was the grand feast day of the India House Clerks. I think you must have heard Charles talk of his yearly turtle feast. He has been lately much wearied with work, and, glad to get rid of all connected with it, he *used* Saturday, the feast day being a holiday, *borrowed* the Monday following, and we set off on the outset of the Cambridge Coach from Fetter Lane at eight o'clock, and were driven into Cambridge in great triumph by Hell Fire Dick five minutes before three. Richard is in high reputation, he is private tutor to the Whip Club. Journeys used to be tedious torments to me, but, seated out in the open air, I enjoyed every mile of the way—the first twenty miles was particularly pleasing to me, having been accustomed to go so far on that road in the Ware Stage Coach to visit my Grandmother in the days of other times.

"In my life I never spent so many pleasant hours together as I did at Cambridge. We were walking the whole time—out of one College into another. If you ask me which I like best, I must make the children's traditionary unoffending reply to all curious enquirers—'*Both.*' I liked them all best. The little gloomy ones, because they were little gloomy ones. I felt as if I could live and die in them and never wish to speak again. And the fine grand Trinity College, Oh how fine it was! And King's College Chapel, what a place!

I heard the Cathedral service there, and having been no great church goer of late years, *that* and the painted windows and the general effect of the whole thing affected me wonderfully.

"I certainly like St. John's College best. I had seen least of it, having only been over it once, so, on the morning we returned, I got up at six o'clock and wandered into it by myself—by myself indeed, for there was nothing alive to be seen but one cat, who followed me about like a dog. Then I went over Trinity, but nothing hailed me there, not even a cat.

"On the Sunday we met with a pleasant thing. We had been congratulating each other that we had come alone to enjoy, as the miser his feast, all our sights greedily to ourselves, but having seen all we began to grow flat and wish for this and tother body with us, when we were accosted by a young gownsman whose face we knew, but where or how we had seen him we could not tell, and were obliged to ask his name. He proved to be a young man we had seen twice at Alsager's. He turned out a very pleasant fellow—showed us the insides of places—we took him to our Inn to dinner, and drank tea with him in such a delicious college room, and then again he supped with us. We made our meals as short as possible, to lose no time, and walked our young conductor almost off his legs. Even when the fried eels were ready for supper and coming up, having a message from a man who we had bribed for the purpose, that then we might see Oliver Cromwell, who was *not at home* when we called to see him, we sallied out again and made him a visit by candlelight —and so ended our sights. When we were setting out in the morning our new friend came to bid us good-bye, and rode with us as far as Trompington. I never saw

a creature so happy as he was the whole time he was with us, he said we had put him in such good spirits that [he] should certainly pass an examination well that he is to go through in six weeks in order to qualify himself to obtain a fellowship.

"Returning home down old Fetter Lane, I could hardly keep from crying to think it was all over. With what pleasure [Charles] shewed me Jesus College where Coleridge was—the barbe[r's shop] where Manning was —the house where Lloyd lived—Franklin's rooms, a young schoolfellow with whom Charles was the first time he went to Cambridge: I peeped in at his window, the room looked quite deserted — old chairs standing about in disorder that seemed to have stood there ever since they had sate in them. I write sad nonsense about these things, but I wish you had heard Charles talk his nonsense over and over again about his visit to Franklin, and how he then first felt himself commencing gentleman and had eggs for his breakfast." Charles Lamb commencing gentleman!

A lady who is sitting by me, seeing what I am doing, says I remind her of her husband, who acknowledged that the first love letter he wrote to her was a copy of one he had made use of on a former occasion.

This is no letter, but if you give me any encouragement to write again you shall have one entirely to yourself: a little encouragement will do, a few lines to say you are well and remember us. I will keep this to-morrow, maybe Charles will put a few lines to it— I always send off a humdrum letter of mine with great satisfaction if I can get him to freshen it up a little at the end. Let me beg my love to your sister Johanna with many thanks. I have much pleasure in looking

forward to her nice bacon, the maker of which I long have had a great desire to see.

God bless you, my dear Miss Hutchinson, I remain ever, your affectionate friend, M. LAMB

II

DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON,—I subscribe most willingly to all my sister says of her Enjoyment at Cambridge. She was in silent raptures all the while *there*, and came home riding thro' the air (her 1st long outside journey) triumphing as if she had been *graduated*. I remember one foolish-pretty expression she made use of, "Bless the little churches how pretty they are," as those symbols of civilised life opened upon her view, one after the other, on this side Cambridge. You cannot proceed a mile without starting a steeple, with its little patch of villagery round it, enverduring the waste. I don't know how you will pardon part of her letter being a transcript, but writing to another Lady first (probably as the *easiest task*) it was unnatural not to give you an acco[t] of what had so freshly delighted her, and would have been a piece of transcendant rhetorick (above her modesty) to have given two different accounts of a simple and univocal pleasure. Bless me how learned I write! but I always forget myself when I write to Ladies. One cannot tame one's erudition down to their merely English apprehensions. But this and all other faults you will excuse from yours truly,

C. LAMB

A Poet in the Alps

The Rev. T. E. Brown describes the Jungfrau

(To Mrs. Williamson)

October 18, 1874

OUR three weeks in Switzerland were consummate. No rain, no wind, a perpetual bath of sunshine, hot of course, but at those heights deliciously bracing and stimulating; sunshine that got into your brain and heart, and set you all aglow with a sweet radiant fire I never thought possible for my old jaded *apparatus physicus*. We went by Paris to Neufchatel; thence to Berne, Thun, Interlaken, Lauterbrunnen, Mürren. Here we stayed a week. It was the best part of our holiday; a week never, *never* to be forgotten.

Mürren faces the Jungfrau. This glorious creature is your one object of interest from morning to night. It seems so near that you could fancy a stone might be thrown across to it. Between you and it is a broad valley: but so deep, and with sides so precipitous, that it is entirely out of sight. So the Jungfrau *vis-à-vis*-es you frankly through the bright sweet intervening air. And then she has such moods; such unutterable smiles, such inscrutable sulks, such growls of rage suppressed, such thunder of avalanches, such crowns of stars. One evening our sunset was the real rose pink you have heard of so much. It fades, you know, into a deathlike chalk-white. That is the most *awful* thing. A sort of spasm seems to come over her face, and in an instant she is a corpse, rigid, and oh, so cold! Well, so she died, and you felt as if a great soul had ebbed away into the Heaven of Heavens: and thankful, but very sad, I went up to my room. I was reading by candle-light, for it gets dark immediately after sunset, when A. shrieked

to me to come to the window. What a Resurrection—so gentle, so tender—like that sonnet of Milton's about his dead wife returning in vision! The moon had risen; and there was the Jungfrau—oh chaste, oh blessed saint in glory everlasting! Then all the elemental spirits that haunt crevasses, and hover around peaks, all the patient powers that bear up the rock buttresses, and labour to sustain great slopes, all streams, and drifts, and flowers, and vapours, made a symphony, a time most solemn and rapturous. It was there, unheard perhaps, unheard, I will not deny it; but there, nevertheless. A young Swiss felt it, and with exquisite delicacy feeling his way, as it were, to some expression, however inadequate, he played a sonata of Schumann, and one or two of the songs, such as the *Frühlingsnacht*. Forgive my rhapsody: but, you know, you don't get those things twice. And let me say just one word of what followed. The abyss below was a pot of boiling blackness, and on to this, and down into this, and all over this, the moonlight fell as meal falls on to porridge from nimbly sifting fingers. Moon-meal! that was it.

I climbed the Schilthorn one day before breakfast; it is about 10,000 feet; but, as a rule, I didn't like to leave A. alone; so that my climbing was of the most limited, and I scarcely got on to ice at all. At Mürren, perhaps more than anywhere else, we had the most astounding richness of pasture. But Switzerland, generally, is in this respect unique. So lush is the vegetation, that it is almost impossible to get up into bare savagery of desolation.

The sweet bright Flora baffles you; she springs like a bacchante from height to height. You can't get above her. I don't mean fat, fulsome richness; but the pastures are so velvety, so parsemèd with all imaginable

colours. The grass seems to be all flowers, and the flowers to be all grass: the closest-grained math I ever beheld; and through it everywhere, led by careful hands, go singing, hissing rather, like sharp silver scythes, the little blessed streams. I was not prepared for this.

We got to Chamounix and went up the Flégère, and A. was like a roe upon the mountains; and every care and every strain of anxiety and bother was wiped from off our souls, and we were both, as we once were, young and full of hope and love. Age and the love shall remain, God wot, but the other things—all right! all right!

VII

THE LITTLE FRIENDS

William Cowper loses Puss

(To the Rev. John Newton)

August 21, 1780

THE following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with.

Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlour, as if one of the hares was entangled, and endeavouring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from table, when it ceased. In about five minutes, a voice on the outside of the parlour door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favourite Puss had made her escape.

She had gnawed in sunder the strings of a lattice work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air.

From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw

the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me that, having seen her, just after she had dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimbler, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour, Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account. That soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt of men, women, children, and dogs; that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed between himself and Puss;—she ran right through the town, and down the lane that leads to Dropshort; a little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it, sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tanyard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's.

Sturges's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way.

There she encountered the tanpits full of water; and while she was struggling out of one pit, and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears, and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe we did not grudge a farthing of it.

The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws, and in one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as

it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I cannot express better than in the words of Terence a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.*—Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Gilbert White becomes Timothy's autobiographer

(To his Niece)

SELBORNE, *August* 31, 1784

MOST RESPECTABLE LADY,—Your letter gave me great satisfaction, being the first that I ever was honored with. It is my wish to answer you in my own way; but I never could make a verse in my life, so you must be contented with plain prose. Having seen but little of this great world, conversed but little, and read less, I feel myself much at a loss how to entertain so intelligent a correspondent. Unless you will let me write about myself, my answer will be very short indeed.

Know, then, that I am an American, and was born in the year 1734, in the province of Virginia, in the midst of a Savanna that lay between a large tobacco plantation and a creek of the sea. Here I spent my youthful days among my relatives with great satisfaction, and saw around me many venerable kinsmen, who had attained great ages, without any interruptions from distempers.

Longevity is so general among our species that a funeral is quite a strange occurrence. I can just remember the death of my great-great-grandfather, who departed this life in the 160th year of his age.

Happy should I have been in the enjoyment of my native climate, and the society of my friends, had not a sea-boy, who was wandering about to see what he could

pick up, surprised me as I was sunning myself under a bush; and whipping me into his wallet, carried me aboard his ship. The circumstances of our voyage are not worth a recital; I only remember that the rippling of the water against the sides of our vessel as we sailed along was a very lulling and composing sound, which served to soothe my slumbers as I lay in the hold. We had a short voyage, and came to anchor on the coast of England in the harbour of Chichester.

In that city my kidnapper sold me for half-a-crown to a country gentleman, who came up to attend an election. I was immediately packed in a hand-basket, and carried, slung by the servant's side, to their place of abode. As they rode very hard for forty miles, and I had never been on horseback before, I found myself somewhat giddy from my airy jaunt. My purchaser, who was a great humorist, after showing me to some of his neighbours, and giving me the name of Timothy, took little further notice of me; so I fell under the care of his lady, a benevolent woman, whose humane attention extended to the meanest of her retainers. With this gentlewoman I remained almost forty years, living in a little walled-in court in the front of her house, and enjoying much quiet, and as much satisfaction as I could expect without society.

At last this good old lady died, in a very advanced old age, such as a tortoise would call a good old age; and I then became the property of her nephew. This man, my present master, dug me out of my winter retreat, and packing me in a deal box, jumbled me eighty miles in post-chaises to my present place of abode. I was sore shaken by this expedition, which was the worst journey I ever experienced. In my present situation I enjoy many advantages—such as the range of an

extensive garden, affording a variety of sun and shade, and abounding in lettuces, poppies, kidney-beans, and many other salubrious and delectable herbs and plants, and especially with a great choice of delicate gooseberries! But still at times I miss my good old mistress, whose grave and regular deportment suited best with my disposition. For you must know that my master is what they call a *naturalist*, and much visited by people of that turn, who often find him on whimsical experiments, such as feeling my pulse, putting me in a tub of water to try if I can swim, etc., and twice in the year I am carried to the grocer's to be weighed, that it may be seen how much I am wasted during the months of my abstinence, and how much I gain by feasting in the summer. Upon these occasions I am placed in the scale on my back, where I sprawl about to the great diversion of the shopkeeper's children. These matters displease me; but there is another that much hurts my pride—I mean that contempt shown for my understanding which these *Lords* of the *Creation* are very apt to discover, thinking that nobody knows anything but themselves. I heard my master say that he expected that I should some day tumble down the ha-ha; whereas I would have him to know that I can discern a precipice from plain ground as well as himself. Sometimes my master repeats with much seeming triumph the following lines, which occasion a loud laugh—

> "Timotheus, placed on high
> Amidst the tuneful choir,
> With flying fingers touched the lyre."

For my part I see no wit in the application, nor know whence these verses are quoted, perhaps from some prophet of his own, who, if he penned them for the sake

of ridiculing tortoises, bestowed his pains, I think, to poor purposes. These are some of my grievances ; but they sit very light on me in comparison of what remains behind.

Know, then, tender-hearted lady, that my greatest misfortune, and what I have never divulged to anyone before, is the want of society of my own kind.

This reflection is always uppermost in my own mind, but comes upon me with irresistible force every spring It was in the month of May last, that I resolved to elope from my place of confinement, for my fancy had represented to me that probably many agreeable tortoises of both sexes might inhabit the heights of Baker's Hill, or the extensive plains of the neighbouring meadows, both of which I could discern from the terrass. One sunny morning, therefore, I watched my opportunity, found the wicket open, eluded the vigilance of Thomas Hoar, and escaped into the St. foin, which began to be in bloom, and thence into the beans. I was missing eight days, wandering in this wilderness of sweets, and exploring the meadows at times. But my pains were all to no purpose ; I could find no society such as I wished and sought for. I began to grow hungry, and to wish myself at home. I therefore came forth into sight, and surrendered myself up to Thomas, who had been inconsolable in my absence. Thus, madam, have I given you a faithful account of my satisfactions and sorrows, the latter of which are uppermost. You are a lady, I understand, of much sensibility. Let me, therefore, make my case your own in the following manner, and then you will judge of my feelings.

Suppose you were to be kidnapped away *to-morrow*, in the bloom of your life, to the land of Tortoises, and were never to see again for fifty years a human face ! ! ! Think on this, dear lady, and pity your sorrowful Reptile, TIMOTHY

Boz Bereaved

Charles Dickens tells Captain Basil Hall of the death of his raven

March 16, 1841

MY raven's dead. He had been ailing for a few days, but not seriously, as we thought, and was apparently recovering, when symptoms of relapse occasioned me to send for an eminent medical gentleman, one Herring (a bird fancier in the New Road), who promptly attended and administered a powerful dose of castor oil. This was on Tuesday last. On Wednesday morning he had another dose of castor oil and a teacupful of warm gruel, which he took with great relish, and under the influence of which he so far recovered his spirits as to be able to bite the groom severely. At 12 o'clock at noon he took several turns up and down the stable with a grave, sedate air, and suddenly reeled. This made him thoughtful. He stopped directly, shook his head, moved on again, stopped once more, cried in a tone of remonstrance and considerable surprise, "Halloa, old girl!" and immediately died. He has left a rather large property (in cheese and halfpence) buried, for security's sake, in various parts of the garden. I am not without suspicions of poison. A butcher was heard to threaten him some weeks since, and he stole a clasp knife belonging to a vindictive carpenter, which was never found. For these reasons, I directed a post-mortem examination preparatory to the body being stuffed; the result of it has not yet reached me. The medical gentleman broke out the fact of his decease to me with great delicacy, observing that "the jolliest queer start had taken place with that 'ere knowing card of a bird, as ever he see'd,"—but the shock was naturally very great. With reference to the jollity of the start, it appears that a raven dying at

two hundred and fifty or thereabouts, is looked upon as an infant. This one would hardly, as I may say, have been born for a century or so to come, being only two or three years old.

The Swan of Lichfield loses Sappho

(To Mr. Newton)

January 16, 1791

I WRITE to you, thus early on the receipt of yours, beneath the impression of a severe shock from the sudden death, in my presence, of my darling little dog, by the breaking, as it is supposed, of the aneurism in her throat, which had never seemed to have given her the least annoyance till the minute in which it destroyed her. Her life had been a three years' rapture, so cloudless had been her health, so gay was her spirit, so agile her light and bounding frame, so pleasurable her keen sensibilities. How I miss her, constant and sweet companion as she was, it is not in every heart to conceive, or, conceiving it, to pity. Giovanni laments her not less fondly ; and her fate left no eye unwet in my little household. Her loss has spread the gloom of silence through this large mansion, so thinly tenanted, that perpetually rung with the demonstrations either of her joy or guardian watchfulness. Her incessant affection for me, her gentleness and perfect obedience, occur hourly to my remembrance, and " thrill my heart with melancholy pain."

My ingenious, learned, and benevolent neighbour, Mr. Green, whose poetic talents are admirable, sent me the ensuing enchanting stanzas, the day after I lost the beautiful, the clean, the sensible, the beloved little creature—

Frequent Tear and Beamy Eyes

(To Miss Seward on the death of her favourite lap-dog Sappho)

Cease, gentle maid, to shed the frequent tear,
That dims the lustre of thy beamy eyes;
Grief, and her tempting luxuries forbear,
Nor longer heave those unavailing sighs.

Say, shall that heart, with noblest passions warm,
Where friendship and her train delight to rest,
That mind, where sense and playful fancy charm,
By fond extreme of pity sink oppress'd?

What though thy favourite, with her parting breath,
Implor'd thy succour in a piercing yell,
And seem'd to court thy kind regards in death,
As at thy feet, in mortal trance, she fell:

What though, when fate's resistless mandate came,
Thy friendly hand was stretch'd in vain to save,
Yet can that hand bestow a deathless fame,
And plant unfading flowers around her grave.

Then let thy strains in plaintive accents flow,
So shall thy much-loved Sappho still survive
So shall her beauties shine with brighter glow,
And in thy matchless verse for ages live.

Thus, if perchance the splendid amber folds
Some tiny insect in its crystal womb,
While its rare form the curious eye beholds,
The insect shares the glories of its tomb.

Severe has been the breath of this rugged winter;—I hope it spreads no lasting blight in your domestic comforts. I have been much out of health through its icy progress, and obliged to throw myself upon medical assistance. Within this month my disorder has given way to the skill of my physicians; but Mr. Saville, the disinterested, the humane, still suffers seizures in his

stomach, of an uncommon, and surely of an alarming nature. Heaven send they may be transient, and, in its mercy, restore to health a life so valuable. Adieu!

Charles Lamb and his dog

MRS. LEISHMAN'S, CHACE, ENFIELD,
September 1827

DEAR PATMORE,—Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash? (I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules, and was improving—but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing.) Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore*? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him! All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he won't lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time—but that was in *Hyder*-Ally's time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It

would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. Patmore and the children. They'd have more sense than he! He'd be like a Fool kept in the family to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad dance set to the mad howl. *Madge Owl-et* would be nothing to him. "My, how he capers!" [*In the margin is written:* One of the children speaks this.]

[*Three lines here are erased.*] What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but, I remember, you don't read German. But Mrs. Patmore may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—"Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid fire or a precipice:—" which I think is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we.

If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast, that all is not right with him (Dash), muzzle him, and lead him in a string (common pack-thread will do; he don't care for twist) to Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted anything, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly at a Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield, where, if you come a-hunting, we can give you cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor; but that, you know, does not make her one. I knew a jailor (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. Patmore's regimen. I send my love in —— to Dash.

C. Lamb

Charles Dickens describes his welcome home

Gads Hill, Higham, by Rochester, Kent
May 25, 1868

MY DEAR MRS. FIELDS,—As you ask me about the dogs, I begin with them. When I came down first, I came to Gravesend, five miles off. The two Newfoundland dogs, coming to meet me with the usual carriage and the usual driver, and beholding me coming in my usual dress out at the usual door, it struck me that their recollection of my having been absent for any unusual time was at once cancelled. They behaved (they are both young dogs) exactly in their usual manner; coming behind the basket phaeton as we trotted along, and lifting their heads to have their ears pulled—a special attention which they receive from no one else. But when I drove into the stableyard, Linda (the St. Bernard) was greatly excited; weeping profusely, and throwing herself on her back, that she might caress my foot with her great fore-paws. Mamie's little dog, too, Mrs. Bouncer, barked in the greatest agitation on being called down and asked by Mamie, "Who is this?" and tore round and round me, like the dog in the Faust outlines. You must know that all the farmers turned out on the road in their market-chaises to say, "Welcome home, sir!" and that all the houses along the road were dressed with flags; and that our servants, to cut out the rest, had dressed this house so that every brick of it was hidden. They had asked Mamie's permission to "ring the alarm bell" (!) when

master drove up, but Mamie, having some slight idea that that compliment might awaken master's sense of the ludicrous, had recommended bell abstinence. But on Sunday the village choir (which includes the bell-ringers) made amends. After some unusually brief pious reflections in the crowns of their hats, at the end of the sermon, the ringers bolted out, and rang like mad until I got home. There had been a conspiracy among the villagers to take the horse out, if I had come to our own station, and draw me here. Mamie and Georgy had got wind of it and warned me.

Divers birds sing here all day, and the nightingales all night. The place is lovely, and in perfect order. I have put five mirrors in the Swiss châlet (where I write), and they reflect and refract in all kinds of ways the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees, and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in, at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.

Dolby (who sends a world of messages) found his wife much better than he expected, and the children (wonderful to relate!) perfect. The little girl winds up her prayers every night with a special commendation to Heaven of me and the pony—as if I must mount him to get there! I dine with Dolby (I was going to write "him," but found it would look as if I were going to dine with the pony) at Greenwich this very day, and if your ears do not burn from six to nine this evening, then the Atlantic is a non-conductor.

It is time I should explain the otherwise inexplicable

enclosure. Will you tell Fields, with my love (I suppose he hasn't used *all* the pens yet?), that I think there is in Tremont Street a set of my books, sent out by Chapman, not arrived when I departed. Such set of the immortal works of our illustrious, etc., is designed for the gentleman to whom the enclosure is addressed. If T., F. & Co. will kindly forward the set (carriage paid) with the enclosure to ——'s address, I will invoke new blessings on their heads, and will get Dolby's little daughter to mention them nightly.

"No Thoroughfare" is very shortly coming out in Paris, where it is now in active rehearsal. It is still playing here, but without Fechter, who has been very ill. The doctor's dismissal of him to Paris, however, and his getting better there, enables him to get up the play there. He and Wilkie missed so many pieces of stage-effect here, that, unless I am quite satisfied with his report, I shall go over and try my stage-managerial hand at the Vaudeville theatre.—Ever, my dear Mrs. Fields, your most affectionate friend.

VIII

URBANITY AND NONSENSE

Horace Walpole affects to reprimand Lady Howe

November 10, 1764

SOH! Madam, you expect to be thanked, because you have done a very obliging thing! But I won't thank you, and I won't be obliged. It is very hard one can't come into your house and commend anything, but you must recollect it and send it after one! I will never dine in your house again; and, when I do, I will like nothing; and when I do, I will commend nothing; and when I do, you shan't remember it. You are very grateful indeed to Providence that gave you so good a memory, to stuff it with nothing but bills of fare of what everybody likes to eat and drink! I wonder you are not ashamed—I wonder you are not ashamed! Do you think there is no such thing as gluttony of the memory?—you a Christian! a pretty account you will be able to give of yourself! Your fine folks in France may call this friendship and attention, perhaps, but sure, if I was to go to the devil, it should be for thinking of nothing but myself, not of others, from morning to night. I would send back your temptations,

but, as I will not be obliged to you for them, verily I shall retain them to punish you; ingratitude being a proper chastisement for sinful friendliness.—Thine in spirit,

PILCHARD WHITFIELD

Charles Dickens implores the loan of a great tragedian's fancy vest

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Friday Evening, October 17, 1845

MY DEAR MACREADY,—You once—only once—gave the world assurance of a waistcoat. You wore it, sir, I think, in "Money." It was a remarkable and precious waistcoat, wherein certain broad strips of blue or purple disported themselves as by a combination of extraordinary circumstances, too happy to occur again. I have seen it on your manly chest in private life. I saw it, sir, I think, the other day in the cold light of morning—with feelings easier to be imagined than described. Mr. Macready, sir, are you a father? If so, lend me that waistcoat for five minutes. I am bidden to a wedding (where fathers are made), and my artist cannot, I find (how should he?), imagine such a waistcoat. Let me show it to him as a sample of my tastes and wishes; and—ha, ha, ha, ha!—eclipse the bridegroom!

I will send a trusty messenger at half-past nine precisely, in the morning. He is sworn to secrecy. He durst not for his life betray us, or swells in ambuscade would have the waistcoat at the cost of his heart's blood.—Thine,

THE UNWAISTCOATED ONE

Charles Lamb brings himself to write to Australia

(To Barron Field)

August 31, 1817

MY DEAR BARRON,—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the *Statesman*—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain "small deer."

Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one :—

> "So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be."

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing), as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, namely, Sunday, 31st August 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd February 1818, as it will be, perhaps, when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere. C. L.

The Dean extemporises to Dr. Sheridan

(To Dr. Sheridan)

January 25, 1724-5

I HAVE a packet of letters, which I intended to send by Molly, who has been stopped three days by the bad weather; but now I will send them by the post to-morrow to Kells, and enclosed to Mr. Tickell; there is one to you and one to James Stopford.

I can do no work this terrible weather; which has put us all seventy times out of patience. I have been deaf nine days, and am now pretty well recovered again.

Pray desire Mr. Stanton and Mr. Worral to continue giving themselves some trouble with Mr. Pratt; but let it succeed or not, I hope I shall be easy.

Mrs. Johnson swears it will rain till Michaelmas. She is so pleased with her pick-axe, that she wears it fastened to her girdle on her left side, in balance with her watch. The lake is strangely overflown, and we are desperate about turf, being forced to lay it three miles off; and Mrs. Johnson (God help her!) gives you many a curse. Your mason is come, but cannot yet work upon your garden. Neither can I agree with him about the great wall. For the rest, *vide* the letter you will have on Monday, if Mr. Tickell uses you well.

The news of the country is, that the maid you sent down, John Farelly's sister, is married; but the portion and settlement are yet a secret. The cows here never give milk on Midsummer Eve.

You would wonder what carking and caring there is among us for small beer and lean mutton, and stewed lamb, and stopping gaps, and driving cattle from the covers. In that we are all-to-be-Dingleyed.

The ladies' room smokes, the rain drops from the skies into the kitchen, our servants eat and drink like the devil, and pray for rain, which entertains them at cards and sleep, which are revels lighter than spades, sledges, and crows. Their maxim is—

Eat like a Turk,
Sleep like a dormouse,
Be last at work,
At victuals foremost.

Which is all at present; hoping you and your good family are well, as we are all at this present writing, etc.

Robin has just carried out a load of bread and cold meat for breakfast; this is their way; but now a cloud hangs over them, for fear it should hold up, and the clouds blow off.

I write on till Molly comes in for the letter. O, what a draggletail she will be before she gets to Dublin! I wish she may not happen to fall upon her back by the way.

I affirm against Aristotle that cold and rain congregate homogenes, for they gather together you and your crew, at whist, punch, and claret. Happy weather for Mr. Mauls, Betty, and Stopford, and all true lovers of cards and laziness.

Blessings of a Country Life

Far from our debtors,
No Dublin letters,
Not seen by our betters.

William Cowper's Morning

THE PLAGUES OF A COUNTRY LIFE

A companion with news,
A great want of shoes;
Eat lean meat, or choose
A church without pews.
Our horses astray,
No straw, oats, or hay
December in May,
Our boys now away,
Our servants at play.

William Cowper looks backward

(To the Rev. John Newton)

February 10, 1784

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect.

As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time.

So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose.

The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still.

In many respects we have the advantage of our forefathers the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, and are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad.

But, on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery ; but physicians, I presume, they had none, having no need of any.

Is it possible, that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance?

What an alteration have a few ages made? They, without clothing, would defy the severest season ; and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest.

If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence.

I suppose if such a disorder could have seized a Pict, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in his throat, and that he was in some danger of choking

They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case.

But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy. For this difference, however, that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices, and enfeebling self-indulgence, of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self,—a man indeed, but not in the image of those that went before me ;—a man, who sighs and groans, who wears out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never thinks

of the aborigines of the country to which he belongs, without wishing that he had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree being permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature unimpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity. I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture, that we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgment we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly charactered, and the features full of expression.

So I think of my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose gracefully of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution; and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others.

He was as much stouter than a Pict, as I suppose a Pict to have been than I. Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension, in point of bodily vigour, from Adam down to me; at least if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I cannot help giving it, such must have been the case.—Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Christmas in China

Charles Lamb invents for Manning

December 25, 1815

DEAR OLD FRIEND AND ABSENTEE,—This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, home-stalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *Unto us a child*; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery —I feel.

I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your

friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's Church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —— or a ——. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Strulbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is, I believe, the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed ot the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses

upon it written by Miss Hayes, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the "Wanderings of Cain," in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism and metaphysics, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you

some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make. Come as soon as you can.

C. LAMB

The Dean jests with Miss Hoadly

June 4, 1734

MADAM,—When I lived in England, once every year I issued out an edict, commanding that all ladies of wit, sense, merit, and quality, who had an ambition to be acquainted with me, should make the first advances at their peril; which edict, you may believe, was universally obeyed. When (much against my will) I came to live in this kingdom, I published the same edict; only, the harvest here being not altogether so plentiful, I confined myself to a smaller compass. This made me often wonder how you came so long to neglect your duty; for, if you pretend ignorance, I may produce legal witnesses against you.

I have heard of a judge bribed with a pig, but it was discovered by the squeaking; and, therefore, you have been so politic as to send me a dead one, which can tell no tales. Your present of butter was made with the same design, as a known court practice, to grease my fist that I might keep silence. These are great offences, contrived on purpose to corrupt my integrity. And, besides, I apprehend, that if I should wait on you to return my thanks, you will deny that the pig and butter were any advances at all on your side, and give out that I made them first: by which I may endanger the fundamental privilege, that I have kept so many years

in the kingdom, at least make it a point of controversy. However, I have two ways to be revenged: first, I will let all the ladies of my acquaintance know, that you, the sole daughter and child of his Grace of Dublin, one so mean as to descend to understand housewifery; which every girl of this town, who can afford sixpence a month for a chair, would scorn to be thought to have the least knowledge in; and this will give you as ill a reputation as if you had been caught in the act of reading a history, or handling a needle, or working in a field at Tallagh. My other revenge shall be this: when my lord's gentleman delivered his message, after I put him some questions, he drew out a paper containing your directions, and in your hand; I said it properly belonged to me; and, when I had read it, I put it in my pocket, and am ready to swear, when lawfully called, that it is written in a fair hand, rightly spelt, and good plain sense. You now may see I have you at mercy; for, upon the least offence given, I will show the paper to every female scrawler I meet, who will soon spread about the town that your writing and spelling are ungenteel and unfashionable, more like a parson than a lady.

I suppose, by this time, you are willing to submit; and, therefore, I desire you may stint me to two china bowls of butter a-week; for my breakfast is that of a sickly man, rice gruel, and I am wholly a stranger to tea and coffee, the companions of bread and butter. I received my third bowl last night, and I think my second is almost entire. I hope and believe my lord archbishop will teach his neighbouring tenants and farmers a little English country management; and I lay it upon you, madam, to bring housewifery in fashion among our ladies; that, by your example, they may no

longer pride themselves on their natural or affected ignorance.—I am, with the truest respect and esteem, Madam, your most obedient and obliged, etc.,

JON. SWIFT

I desire to present my most etc., to his grace and the ladies.

William Cowper drops into verse

(To the Rev. John Newton)

July 12, 1781

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows, whether what I have got be verse or not: by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk and not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark, to Weston Park.

The news at *Oney* is little or noney, but such as it is, I send it, viz.—Poor Mr. Peace cannot yet cease addling his head with what you said, and has left parish-church quite in the lurch, having almost swore to go there no more.

Page and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them twain in Dog Lane; we gave them the wall, and that was all. For Mr. Scott, we have seen him not, except as he pass'd, in a wonderful haste, to see a friend in Silver End. Mrs. Jones proposes, ere July closes, that she and her sister, and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer to dine in the

Spinney; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold so hot and so cold, we had better by far stay where we are. For the grass there grows while nobody mows (which is very wrong) so rank and long, that, so to speak, 'tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, ere it dries again. I have writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say "to be sure, the gentleman's Muse wears Methodist shoes; you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoidening play, of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan to catch if she can the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction. She has baited her trap in hopes to snap all that may come with a sugar-plum."—

His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end; and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid for all I have said and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year. I have heard before, of a room with a floor laid upon springs and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay,

till you come to an end of what I have penn'd; which that you may do ere Madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me— W. C.

P.S.—When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right, as well you might, in saying what I said of Scott; and then it was true, but now it is due to him to note, that since I wrote, himself and he has visited we.

Charles Lamb cries out against Tartary

[*February* 19, 1803]

MY DEAR MANNING,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Maundevil's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and

associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans—pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft now has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to

see it Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did like* it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, "Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?" But for a man boldly to face me out with, "Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest," is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honorable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman.* Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them] pray contrive to *stink* as soon as you can that you may [? not] hang a [? on] hand at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.—Your sincere fr^d^, C. LAMB

The "Crismiss" Dinner

W. M. Thackeray thanks a friend for two geese

(*Now for the first time published*)

36 Onslow Square, *December* 27, 18—

DEAR CARTER,—I should be an ungrateful wretch if I didn't tell you that the geese were excellent. The servants polished theirs entirely off; and ours was admired and appreciated by everybody who partook thereof. I carved it, and I need not say some of the best slices of the bosom were appropriated to yours gratefully, W. M. Thackeray

[*Here a drawing of geese on a common*]

Hymn the First

The housewives of a former age
Were wont to stuff a Goose with sage.
You put the Bird to nobler use,
Carter! and stuff a Sage with goose.

Hymn the Second

"Lawk, Miss Anny, Lawk, Miss Minny!" thus cries Gray the cook,
"Two such beautiful geese is come! Only come and look!

"Lor, how plump and brown they'll be! Lor, how plump and juicy!
Well, of hall things I declare I do love a goosey!

"Two fat geese, how genteel! Only think of this, miss!
Don't they come convenient for the dinner at Crismiss!

"One shall be for the Servants' 'All, and one for the parlour arter,
And I never shall see a goose again, without thinking of Mr Carter."

"That I won't," says Mrs. Gray the cook, with her duty, and the best compliments of the season.
And the same she hopes *nex year*.

[*Here a boy standing on his head, with "Turn over" written beneath*]

On second thoughts, and in allusion to a painful transaction last year:

No, this pun is so dreadfully bad,
I think I never can, sir,
But when a man sends me
A goose and a deuced kind letter, I think I might send him an *anser*.

Well, I will next year, that's all I have to say.

Robert Louis Stevenson offers to exchange bodies with Cosmo Monkhouse

La Solitude, Hyères, *April* 24, 1884

DEAR MONKHOUSE,—If you are in love with repose, here is your occasion: change with me. I am too blind to read, hence no reading; I am too weak to walk, hence no walking; I am not allowed to speak, hence no talking; but the great simplification has yet to be named; for, if this goes on, I shall soon have nothing to eat—and hence, O Hallelujah! hence no eating. The offer is a fair one: I have not sold myself to the devil, for I could never find him. I am married, but so are you. I sometimes write verses, but so do you! Come! *Hic quies!* As for the commandments, I have broken them so small that they are the

dust of my chambers; you walk upon them, triturate and toothless; and with the Golosh of Philosophy, they shall not bite your heel. True, the tenement is falling. Ay, friend, but yours also. Take a larger view; what is a year or two? dust in the balance! 'Tis done, behold you Cosmo Stevenson, and me R. L. Monkhouse; you at Hyères, I in London; you rejoicing in the clammiest repose, me proceeding to tear your tabernacle into rags, as I have already so admirably torn my own.

My place to which I now introduce you—it is yours—is like a London house, high and very narrow; upon the lungs I will not linger; the heart is large enough for a ballroom; the belly greedy and inefficient; the brain stocked with the most damnable explosives, like a dynamiter's den. The whole place is well furnished, though not in a very pure taste; Corinthian much of it; showy and not strong.

About your place I shall try to find my way alone, an interesting exploration. Imagine me, as I go to bed, falling over a blood-stained remorse; opening that cupboard in the cerebellum and being welcomed by the spirit of your murdered uncle. I should probably not like your remorses; I wonder if you will like mine; I have a spirited assortment; they whistle in my ear o' nights like a north-easter. I trust yours don't dine with the family; mine are better mannered; you will hear nought of them till 2 a.m., except one, to be sure, that I have made a pet of, but he is small; I keep him in buttons, so as to avoid commentaries; you will like him much—if you like what is genuine.

Must we likewise change religions? Mine is a good article, with a trick of stopping; cathedral bell note; ornamental dial; supported by Venus and the Graces;

quite a summer-parlour piety. Of yours, since your last, I fear there is little to be said.

There is one article I wish to take away with me: my spirits. They suit me. I don't want yours; I like my own; I have had them a long while in bottle. It is my only reservation.—Yours (as you decide),

R. L. MONKHOUSE

An able-bodied seaman asks his brother to be sure to get him a creature comfort

Warren Hastings
EAST INDIANMAN, OFF GRAVESEND
March 24

DEAR BRO' TOM,—This cums hopein to find you in good helth as it leaves me safe ankord here yesterday at 4 p.m., arter a plesent vyage tolerable short and few squalls. Dear Tom, hopes to find poor old father stout. Am quite out of pigtail. Sights of pigtail at Gravesend but unfortinly not fit for a dogtochor. Dear Tom, Captains boy will bring you this and put pigtail in his pocket when bort. Best in London at the black boy 7 diles where go, ax for best pigtail, pound a pigtail will do. And am short of shirts. Dear Tom, as for shirts onley took 2, whereof 1 is quite wore out and tother most, but don't forget the pigtail as I arnt had here a quid to chor never sins Thursday. Dear Tom as for the shirts your size will do only longer. I liks um long, got one at present, best at Tower hill and cheap, but be pertickler to go to 7 diles for the pigtail, at the black boy and dear Tom ax for a pound of best pigtail and let it be good. Captains boy will put the pigtail in his pocket, *he likes pigtail so tie it up*. Dear Tom shall

be up about Monday or thereabouts. Not so pertickler for the shirts as the present can be washed, but dont forget the pigtail without fail, so am your lovein brother,

JACK

P.S.—Dont forget the pigtail.

Letter from a young gentleman to his companion recovered from a fit of sickness

From an old Manual

IT gives me the most sincere pleasure to hear that my dear Tommy is recovering his health so rapidly. Had you died it would have been to me a most terrible loss ; but it has pleased God to preserve my friend.

I will take the first opportunity that offers to call and tell you how valuable your life is to your sincere friend and playfellow.

Answer

YOUR obliging letter, my dear Billy, is a fresh proof of your friendship and esteem for me. I thank God I am now perfectly recovered. I am in some doubt whether I ought not to consider my late illness as a just punishment for my crime of robbing Mr. Goodman's orchard, breaking his boughs and spoiling his hedges. However I am fully determined that evermore no such complaints shall come against your sincere friend and playfellow.

IX

FIRST PERSON SINGULAR

Thomas Carlyle tells all the news

I

(To Dr. Carlyle, Naples)

CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, LONDON, *June* 17, 1834

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You can fancy what weary lonesome wanderings I had, through the dirty suburbs, and along the burning streets, under a fierce May sun with east wind; "seeking through the nation for some habitation"! At length Jane sent me comfortable tidings of innumerable difficulties overcome; and finally (in, I think, the fourth week) arrived herself; with the Furniture all close following her, in one of Pickford's Trade-boats. I carried her to certain of the hopefullest looking houses I had fallen in with, and a toilsome time we anew had: however, it was not long; for, on the second inspection, this old Chelsea Mansion pleased very decidedly far better than any other we could see; and, the people also whom it belongs to proving reasonable, we soon struck a bargain, and in

three days more (precisely this day week) a Hackney Coach, loaded to the roof and beyond it with luggage and live-passengers, tumbled us all down here about eleven in the morning. By "all" I mean my Dame and myself; Bessy Barnet, who had come the night before; and—little *Chico*, the Canary-bird, who *multum jactatus*, did nevertheless arrive living and well from Puttock, and even sang violently all the way by sea or land, nay struck up his *lilt* in the very London streets wherever he could see green leaves and feel the free air. There then we sat on three trunks; I, however, with a matchbox soon lit a cigar, as Bessy did a fire; and thus with a kind of cheerful solemnity we took possession by "raising reek," and even dined, in an extempore fashion, on a box-lid covered with some accidental towel. At two o'clock the Pickfords did arrive; and *then* began the hurly-burly; which even yet is but grown quieter, will not grow quiet, for a fortnight to come.

However, the rooms and two bedrooms are now in a partially civilised state; the broken Furniture is mostly mended; I have my old writing-table again (here) *firm* as Atlas; a large wainscoted drawing-room (which is to be my study) with the "red carpet" tightly spread on it; my Books all safe in Presses; the Belisarius Picture right in front of me over the mantelpiece (most suitable to its new wainscot lodging), and my beloved *Segretario Ambulante* right behind, with the two old Italian engravings, and others that I value less, dispersed around; and so, opposite the middle of my three windows, with little but huge Scotch elm-trees looking in on one, and in the distance an ivied House, and a sunshiny sky bursting out from genial rain, I sit here already very much at home, and impart to my dear and

true brother a thankfulness which he is sure to share in. We have indeed very much reason to be thankful every way.

With the House we are all highly pleased, and, I think, the better, the longer we know it hitherto. I know not if you ever were at Chelsea, especially at Old Chelsea, of which this is a portion. It stretches from Battersea Bridge (a queer wooden structure, where they charge you a half-penny) along the bank of the River, Westward a little way; and Eastward (which is our side) some quarter of a mile, forming a "Cheyne Walk" (pronounced *Chainie* walk) of really grand old brick mansions, dating perhaps from Charles II.'s time ("Don Saltero's Coffeehouse" of the *Tatler* is still fresh and brisk among them), with flagged pavement; carriage way between two rows of stubborn looking high old pollarded trees; and then the River with its varied small craft, fast moving or safe-moored, and the wholesome smell (among the breezes) of sea *tar*. Cheyne Row (or Great Cheyne Row, when we wish to be grand) runs up at right angles from this, has some twenty Houses of the same fashion; Upper Cheyne Row (where Hunt lives) turning *again* at right angles, some stone-cast from this door.

Frontwards we have the outlook I have described already (or if we shove out our head, the River is disclosed some hundred paces to the left); backwards, from the ground floor, our own gardenkin (which I with new garden-tools am actively re-trimming every morning), and, from all other floors, nothing but leafy clumps, and green fields, and red high-peaked roofs glimmering through them: a most clear, pleasant prospect, in these fresh westerly airs! Of London nothing visible but Westminster Abbey and the topmost dome of St. Paul's;

other faint ghosts of spires (one other at least) disclose themselves, as the smoke-clouds shift; but I have not yet made out what they are. At night we are pure and silent, almost as at Puttock; and the gas-light shimmer of the great Babylon hangs stretched from side to side of our horizon. To Buckingham Gate it is thirty-two minutes of my walking (Allan Cunningham's door about half-way); nearly the very same to Hyde-Park Corner, to which latter point we have omnibuses every quarter of an hour (they say) that carry you to the White-horse Cellar, or even to Coventry Street for sixpence; calling for you at the very threshold. Nothing was ever so discrepant in my experience as the Craigen-puttock-silence of this House, and then the world-hubbub of London and its people into which a few minutes brings you: I feel as if a day spent between the two must be the epitome of a month. . . .

The rent is £35; which really seems £10 cheaper than such a House could be had for in Dumfries or Annan. The secret is our old friend, "Gigmanity": Chelsea is unfashionable; it is also reported unhealthy. The former quality we rather like (for our neighbours still are all polite-living people); the latter we do not in the faintest degree believe in, remembering that Chelsea was once considered the "London Montpelier," and knowing that in these matters now as formerly the Cockneys "know nothing," only rush in masses blindly and sheep-wise. Our worst fault is the want of a good free *rustic* walk, like Kensington Gardens, which are above a mile off: however, we have the "College" or Hospital grounds, with their withered old pensioners; we have open carriage ways, and lanes, and really a very pretty route to Piccadilly (different from the omnibus route) through the new Grosvenor edifices, Eaton Square,

Belgrave Place, etc. I have also walked to Westminster Hall by Vauxhall, Bridge-End, Millbank, etc.; but the road is squalid, confused, dusty and detestable, and happily *need* not be returned to. To conclude, we are here on *literary* classical ground, as Hunt is continually ready to declare and unfold: not a stone-cast from this House Smollett wrote his *Count Fathom* (the house is ruined and we happily do not see it); hardly a stone-cast off, old More entertained Erasmus: to say nothing of Bolingbroke St. John, of Paradise Row and the Count de Grammont, for in truth we care almost nothing for them.

On the whole we are exceedingly content so far; and have reason to be so. I add only that our furniture came with wonderfully *little* breakage, and for less than £20, Annan included; that Jane sold all her odd things to Nanny Macqueen on really fair terms; and that we find new furniture of all sorts exceedingly cheap here, and have already got what we need, or nearly so, for less than our own old good, brought us on the spot. . . .

There is now a word to be said on Economics, and the Commissariat Department. Book selling is still at its lowest ebb; yet on the whole *better* than I expected to find it. Fraser is the only craftsman I have yet seen: he talks still of *loss* by his Magazine; and I think will not willingly employ me much, were I never so ready, at the old rate of writing. He seems a well-intentioned creature; I can really pity him in the place he occupies. I went yesterday with a project of a series of articles on French Revolution matters, chiefly to be translated from *Mémoires*: but he could not take them, at my rate, or indeed at almost any rate; for he spoke of £10 a sheet as quite a *ransom*. He has got my name (such as it is), and can do better without me. However, he

will cheerfully print (for "half-profits," that is, *zero*) a projected Book of mine on the French Revolution; to which accordingly, if no new thing occur, I shall probably very soon with all my heart address myself in full purpose to do *my best*, and put my name to it. The *Diamond Necklace* Paper his Boy got from me, by appointment, this morning; to be examined whether it *will* make a Book; as an *Article* I shall perhaps hardly think of giving it to him. For, you are to understand, that Radical Review of Mill's, after seeming to be quite abandoned, has now a far fairer chance of getting started: a Sir W. Molesworth, a young man whom I have seen at Buller's and liked, offers to furnish all the money himself (and can do it, being very rich), and to take no further hand in it, once a manager that will please Mill is found for it. Mill is to be here to-morrow evening: I think I must appoint some meeting with Molesworth, and give him my whole views of it, and express my readiness to take a most hearty hold of it; having the prospect of right companions; none yet but Mill and Buller, and such as we may further approve of and add. It seems likely something may come of this. In any other case, Periodical Authorship, like all other forms of it, seems *done* in the economical sense. I think of quite abandoning it; of writing my Book; and then, with such name as it may give me, starting some new course, or courses, to make honest wages by. A poor Fanny Wright (whom we are to hear to-night in Freemasons' Hall) goes lecturing over the whole world: before eight, I will engage to lecture twice as well; being, as Glen once said, with great violence, to me, "the *more* gigantic spirit of the two."

On the whole I fear nothing. There are funds here already to keep us going above a year, independently of

all incomings: before that we may have seen into much, tried much, and succeeded somewhat. "God's providence they cannot hinder thee of": that is the thing I always repeat to myself, or know without repeating. . . .

God bless you, dear Brother! *Vale mei memor.*

T. CARLYLE

II

(To his sister, Mrs. Aitken, Dumfries)

5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, LONDON, *July* 6, 1834

MY DEAR JEAN—Your Letter, which was the first I had received from any of my Friends in Scotland, proved one of the welcomest I ever got. The Postman's two knocks (for all Postmen give two smart thumps which are known here and elsewhere as the "Postman's knock") brought me it and the newspaper, and delivered me from a multitude of vague imaginations. Newspapers indeed had come the week before, and persuaded me that nothing material was wrong; however, it was still the best that could happen to have it all confirmed in black-on-white. Tell James that in spite of his critical penetration, the Letter "*could* go," and did go, and was welcomed as few are.

Whatever you may think, it is not a "Ten minutes" matter with me, the filling of a frank that will carry an ounce of thin writing paper: it is a decided *business*, which breaks the head of a Day for me; which breakage, however, I am generally well disposed to execute.

Do you also take a large, even a *long*-shaped sheet, a clear pointed pen, and in the smallest hand you can master, repay it me. By no means must I want Dumfriesshire news, especially news about my Mother,

The tax-loaded Post Office is still the most invaluable of Establishments; and the ancient men, that invented *writing*, and made the voice of man triumphant over Space and Time, were deservedly accounted next to gods. I would have you, in particular, do your endeavour by assiduous practice (there is *no* other method) to perfect yourself in that divine art, the uses of which no man can calculate; in time, as I predict, you will acquire very considerable excellence.

As for good composition, it is mainly the result of good thinking, and improves with that, if careful observation as you read attends it: the Penmanship is a secondary matter, and has only three points of perfection, or at most four, that I know of; in all of which one may advance indefinitely by exertion of one's own: that it be straight across the paper, that it be distinct, that it be rapid,—to which, if you like, add that it be *close*, or *much of it* in a given space. "These are good advices"? They are not mine, but the Apostle Butterworth's! I did not design answering you so soon by a week or ten days; as I said in Alick's Letter: but there has come a sheet from Naples, which I was beginning to be very impatient for, and I would not keep it back an instant from my Mother, whose impatience probably is still greater. She has already got hint of it in the last *Examiner*, and also that it is coming by the fore-lock, and hope I shall not miss the day again, as I fear was done in the Catlinns case, after all my exertions: as for you, make up the Parcel again instantly for Jardine and Scotsbrig, or there will be no forgiveness for you.

As you have doubtless seen or will see the copious despatches I have sent to Annandale about our Household Establishment, wherein nothing from the very

watering-pan and marigold flowers upwards is forgotten, I need not dilate farther on that topic. We have at length all but got the last struggles of the upholsterer squadron handsomely conducted out of doors, with far less damage than might have been apprehended; and sit quietly in a Dwelling-place really much beyond what could have been anticipated; where, if Providence but grant us grace not to be wanting to *ourselves*, the rest may pass quite uncriticised. We have not yet ceased to admire the union of quietness and freshness of air, and the outlook into green trees (Plum trees, walnuts, even mulberries, they say), with the close neighbourhood of the noisiest Babylon that ever raged and *fumed* (with coal smoke) on the face of this Planet. I can alternate between the one and the other in half an hour! The London streets themselves are quite a peculiar object, and I daresay of almost *inexhaustible* significance. There is such a torrent of vehicles and faces: the slow-rolling, all-defying waggon, like a mountain in motion, the dejected Hackney-Coach, that "has seen better days," but goes along as with a tough uncomplaining patience, the gay equipage with its light bounding air, and *flunkies* of colour hanging behind it; the *distractea* cab (a thing like a cradle set aslant on its foot-end, where you sit open in front but free from rain), which always some *blackguard* drives with the fury of Jehu; the huge omnibus (a pointed *Corn-Kist*, of twenty feet long, set on four wheels: no, it cannot be *twenty* feet!) which runs along all streets from all points of the compass, as a sixpenny or shilling stage-coach, towards "The Bank" (of England); Butchers' and Brewers' and Bakers' Drays: all these, with wheelbarrows, trucks (hurlies), dogcarts, and a nameless flood of other *small trash*, hold on unweariedly their ever-vexed chaotic way.

And then of foot-passengers! From the King to the Beggar; all in haste, all with a look of care and endeavour; and as if there *were* really "Deevil a thing but one man oppressing another." To wander along and read all this: it is reading one of the strangest everlasting *Newspaper Columns* the eye ever opened on: a Newspaper Column of *living* Letters (as I often say), that was printed in ETERNITY, and is here published only for a little while in TIME, and will soon be recalled—taken out of circulation again.

For the rest, we live exceedingly happy here; as yet visited by few, and happily by almost *none* that is not worth being visited by. At any time, in half an hour, I can have company enough of the sort going; and scarcely above once or twice in the week is my Day taken from me by any intrusion. I am getting rather stiffly to work again; and once well at work, can defy the whole Powers of Darkness, and say in my heart (as Tom Ker the mason did to Denbie and "the Marquis" or some Military minion of his): "Ye will go your length, gentlemen; my name's Tom Ker." By and by, if all go right, you shall see some book of mine with my name (not of "Tom Ker") on it, and the best I can do. Pray that it be honestly done, let its reception be what it will.

Of "amusements," beyond mere strolling, I take little thought. By acquaintance with newspaper people (such as Hunt) I fancy we might procure free admission to the Theatres, even to the Opera, almost every night: but, alas! what would it avail? I actually went, one idle night before Jane came, to Covent Garden; found it a very mystery of stupidity and abomination; and so tiresome that I came away long before the end, and declare that the dullest sermon I ever heard was cheery in comparison.

Philosopher and the Fireworks

The night before last, looking out from our (back) Bedroom window at midnight, I saw the many-coloured rockets rising from Vauxhall Gardens, and thought with myself: "Very well, gentlemen, if you have 'guinea admission' to spare for it; only, thank Heaven, I am not within a measured mile of you!"—There are a few good, even noble people here too; there must be a few; if there were not, the whole concern would take fire: of these I even know some, and hope to know more.

But now, my dear Sister, you have enough of London; let me turn a little northward. I am much obliged by your description of Mother's settlement; I can form a very tolerable notion of her arrangement in the two well-known rooms, and find the most natural that could be made. I hope, however, the *Clock* is now got safely hoisted up: surely, among so many stout hands, any task of that kind could not be difficult. However, where a Honeymoon is in progress one must *thole*, one must *thole*. I also like very well to hear of your Jamie's boarding with our Mother, while he is at his work in the neighbourhood. I follow him across the fresh fields, daily in the morning, to the Ha, and heartily wish him a *useful* day. There is no other way of making a *pleasant* day; that I could ever hear of. That he finds employment in his honest vocation is a great blessing, for which I trust you are thankful.

Tell him to *follow* his vocation honestly, not as a man-pleaser, or one working for the eye of man only, but as one forever under *another* Eye that never slumbers or sleeps, that *sees* in secret, and will reward openly. I hope and believe that this *is* his course, that he will persevere in it, let the wind of accident blow fair or foul; and so I can prophesy all manner of good for him.

. . . There is much louder thunder to-day, and a

copious deluge of rain ; of all which we hope to reap the benefit to-morrow, for the air was growing foully uncomfortable, and oppressive too ; a sour east-wind, amid the sultriest brick kiln heat, with dusts enough and vapours as we have them in these streets and ways. A day's rain washes everything above ground and beneath it. Next morning we can "sniff the *cailer* air," for it is there to snuff. . . . This is a far larger Letter than yours, Dame ; and deserves two in return for it ; think of that, and of what you are to *do* in consequence. . . . That Scotsbrig residence, I think with you and have always thought, can hardly be permanently comfortable for our Mother ; if it serve well for one year, that is all I hope of it : then other outlooks may have opened. In the meanwhile, Toleration, "the Act of Mutual Toleration!" One can live without it *nowhere* on this earth's surface. —Remember me kindly to dear little Prudence. Tell her to mind her seam, and be considerate and wise, and grow daily wiser ; and it will go better and better with her.—Jane, whose health seems better than of old and still improving, sends her love to all of you. . . . And so farewell, my dear Sister. Be true and loving!—Ever your affectionate T. CARLYLE

III

(To Dr. Carlyle, Naples)

5 GREAT CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA
LONDON, *August* 15, 1834

MY DEAR BROTHER,—How long it is since I wrote last is not accurately in my memory ; I know only that your last Letter has been in my hands, and indeed in my Mother's (to whom it was fortunately sent) above a fortnight ; and that *my* last, which was all that

remained due when you wrote, must be fairly digested by this time; so that now, on a day of leisure, another may be fitly despatched. The news of your welfare, your *Seelen-bekenntnisse*, your trustful brotherly affection: all this is ever one of the most solacing items of my lot. To address you in return, and impart my satisfaction and anxieties, with the assurance of having them heartily sympathised in, is also one of my agreeablest employments. Would you were here again! But May is coming, and with it flowers. By God's blessing you will be restored to us; not to wander, we will hope, any more.

There came a Letter from Alick very shortly after mine to you was sent away. All is in the usual way in Annandale; for we have heard again only yesterday from Mrs. Welsh, who had seen Jean and Jenny at Dumfries: nay this moment since I begun to write, the Dumfries newspaper arrives with the mail of safety on it. Alick represents our mother as moving about a good deal on Harry, and keeping her health very tolerably: she does not seem altogether *hefted* yet, he says, at Scotsbrig: however, the new Daughter-in-law seems to be a reasonable young woman, well disposed to do the best for all parties there; till a new Whitsunday at least there can nothing go very far wrong among them. Jamie and she, it would appear, are still fond as turtle-doves and prolonging their Honeymoon. . . . As for Alick himself, he writes in the middle of a wet abundant hay-harvest, and dates on the successive Sundays; he has signified by letter to his Cattlins Landlord that unless they abate him £20 of the rent, he cannot keep the Farm longer than Whitsunday, and so waits, in a kind of confusing uncertainty, the slow issue; forecasting rather that he will *go*.

I am sorry for Alick: he has a heavy burden to bear, and toils at it rather impetuously than steadfastly. There is much wisely-suppressed energy in him too; but he feels, in general, that he is not in his sphere; and has internally only an artificial kind of composure. . . .

As for myself, I go on here almost without adventure of any kind. All of us have tolerable health: Jane generally better than before; I certainly not worse, and run more in the ancient accustomed fashion. I am diligent with the shower bath; my pilgrimages to the Museum and my other Town-errands keep me in walking enough; once or twice weekly, on an evening, Jane and I stroll out along the "Bank of the River," or about "The College," and see white-shirted Cockneys in their green canoes, or old Pensioners pensively smoking tobacco.

I long much for a *hill*, but unhappily there is no such thing; only knolls, and these with difficulty, are attainable.

The London street tumult has become a kind of marching music to me. I walk along, following my own meditations, without thinking of it. Company comes in desirable quantity, not deficient, not excessive, and there is talk enough from time to time. I myself, however, when I consider it, find the whole all too *thin*, unnutritive, unavailing, and that I am *alone* still under the high vault. All London-born men without exception seem to me narrow-built, considerably perverted men, rather fractions of a man. Hunt, by nature a *very* clever man, is one instance; Mill, in quite another manner, is another. These and others continue to come about me, as with the cheering sound of temporary *music*, and are right welcome so: a higher co-operation

will perhaps somewhere else or sometime hence disclose itself.

"There was a piper had a Cow,
And he had nought to give her;
He took his pipes and play'd a spring,
And *bade the Cow consider!*"

Allan Cunningham was here two nights ago, very friendly, very full of Nithsdale and pleasant *Natürmensch.*

Mill gives me logical developments of *how* men act (chiefly in politics); Hunt tricksy devices, and crochety whimsicalities on the same theme: *what* they act is a thing neither of them much sympathises in, much seems to know.

I sometimes long greatly for Irving, for the old Irving of fifteen years ago: nay the poor actual gift-of-tongues Irving has seemed desirable to me; and I have actually, as you shall hear, made my way through to him again.

We dined with Mrs. (Platonica) Taylor and the Unitarian Fox (of the *Repository*, if you know it), one day: Mill also was of the party, and the Husband, an obtuse most joyous-natured man, the pink of Social hospitality. Fox is a little thick-set bushy-locked man of five-and-forty, with bright sympathetic, thoughtful eyes (the whole face reminded me of Æneas Rait's, compressed, and well buttressed out into broadness), with a tendency to pot-belly and *snuffiness*: from these hints you can construe him, the best *Socinian Philosophist* going, but not a whit more.

I shall like well enough to meet the man again; but I doubt he will not me. . . . We walked home however, even Jane did, all the way from the Regent's Park, and felt that we had done a duty. For we, from the Socinians, as I take it, *wird Nichts.* Here too let me

wind up the Radical-Periodical Editorship, which your last letter naturally speculates on. Mill I seem to discern has given it to this same Fox (who has just quitted his Preachership, and will, like myself, be out of the world): partly I should fancy by Mrs. Taylor's influence, partly as himself thinking him the safer man. *Ebbene!* I can already picture to myself the Radical Party Periodical, and even prophesy its destiny: with myself it had not been so; the only thing certain would have been difficulty, pain and contradiction; which I should probably have undertaken: which I am far from breaking my heart that I have missed. I may mention too that Mill is so taken with my *Diamond Necklace*, he in a covert way offered the other night to print it at his own expense, if I would give it him, that he might have the pleasure and profit of reviewing it! Mill likes me well; and on his embarrassed face when Fox happened to be talked of, I read both that Editorship business, and also that Mill had *known* my want of it; which latter was all that I desired to read. As you well say, disappointment on disappointment only simplifies one's course; your possibilities only become diminished, your choice is rendered easier. In general I bate no jot of confidence in myself and in my cause. Nay it often seems to me as if the extremity of suffering, if such were appointed me, might bring out an extremity of energy as yet unknown to myself. God grant me faith; cleanness and peaceableness of heart! I make no other prayer.

As to Literary work there is still no offer made that promises to bring in a penny; though I foresee that probably such will come, and, as they often do, all in a rush. Mill will want if his Fox concern go on; nay poor Heraud was here the other day endeavouring to

bespeak me for a Periodical of his; for even he is to have a dud of a Periodical. Cheeriest and emptiest of all the sons of men! Yet in his emptiness, as in that of a dried bladder, he keeps triumphantly jingling his Coleridgean long-quavered metaphysical cherry-stones, and even "makes a kind of martial music" for himself thereby. I do not remember that I ever met a more ridiculous-harmless froth-lather of a creature in all my travels. He lets you tumble him hither and thither, and cut him in two as you like; but in the cheerfullest way joins again, and is brisk froth-lather as before. One should surely learn by him.—The *Diamond Necklace*, I should have told you, has been refused by Moxon: shall I *let* Mill print? I do not know, and really hardly care. As to Moxon, I reckon that we are not only done with *this*, but with *all*, and need not for the present come into contact again. . . . [Frazer] has finished *Teufelsdröckh*, paid me for it instantly (in all £82, 1s.); and got me 58 perfect copies (really readable pamphlets of 107 pages, and all made up without break), which I was yesterday despatching far and wide from his shop. Some twenty copies yet remain, which I am in no haste to dispose of. . . . The Book is worth little, now that I see it; yet not worth nothing, and will perhaps amuse you. I rejoice heartily in having done with it——. My grand task, as you already know, is the *French Revolution*; which, alas, perplexes me much. More *Books* on it, I find, are but a repetition of those before read; I learn nothing or almost nothing further by Books: yet I am as far as possible from understanding it.

Bedenklichkeiten of all kinds environ me. To be *true* or not to be true? There is the risk. And then, to be popular or not to be popular? that too is a question

that plays most complexly into the other. We shall see, we shall try: *Par ma tête seule!*—Before quitting this of Literature, I must tell you, among numberless discouragements, of two most encouraging messages I have had. The first is from an unknown Irishman from Cork, or rather in Cork:[1] did I tell you of him before? The second is from that American Craigenputtock friend of ours[2] from whom there came a letter and Books lately. Both the two, in the most authentic and credible though exaggerated manner, cry out Εὖγε! for which I am heartily obliged to them. It is in regard to *Teufelsdröckh*, and they both make their objections too. The day of small things! For which, however, one cannot but be thankful. And so enough of my endeavourings and my cares and little pleasures. My good Jack has now as clear a view of [us] all as in a single sheet he could expect. We may say in the words of the Sansculotte Deputy writing to the Convention of the progress of right principles: *Tout va bien ici, LE PAIN MANQUE!* Jane and I often repeat this with laughter. But in truth we live very cheap here (perhaps not above £50 a year dearer than at Puttock), and so can hold out a long while independent of chance. Utter poverty itself (if I hold fast by the faith) has no terrors for me, should it ever come.

I told you I had seen Irving. It was but yesterday, in Newman Street, after *four* prior ineffectual attempts.

William Hamilton, who with his wife was here on Saturday, told me Irving had grown worse again, and Mrs. Irving had been extremely ill: he too seemed to think my Cards had been withheld. Much grieved with this news I called once more on Monday: a new failure. Yesterday I went again with unsuppressible indignation

[1] Father O'Shea. [2] Emerson.

mixed with my pity. After some shying I was admitted! Poor Irving! he lay there on a sofa, begged my pardon for not rising; his wife, who also did not and probably could not well rise, sat at his feet, and watched all the time I was there, miserable, haggard. . . . Irving once lovingly ordered her away: but she lovingly excused herself and sat still. He complains of biliousness; of a pain at his right short-rib; has a short thick cough which comes on at the slightest irritation. Poor fellow! I brought a short gleam of old Scottish laughter into his face, into his voice, and that too set him coughing. He said it was the Lord's will; looked weak, dispirited, partly embarrassed. He continues toiling daily, though the Doctor (Darling) says, rest only can cure him.

Is it not mournful; hyper-tragical? There are moments when I determine on sweeping in upon all Tongue-work and Martindoms and accursed choking Cobwebberies, and snatching away my old best Friend, to save him from Death and the Grave! It seems too likely he will die there. At lowest I will go again soon and often: I cannot think of it with patience.

. . . Mrs. Welsh was up at Craigenputtock; it looks all very wild, and made her greet "*not* that we were gone": she had escorted thither a certain Indian friend who has (through M'Diarmid) taken the shooting, with right to lodging, for £10 a year. Old Nanny M'Queen pays us other £10 for the Park and right of living in the House, with charge of taking care of it, and admitting any decent "Gunner body" of that kind. Both sums I believe will be faithfully paid; and old Nanny is said to be the carefullest of women. . . . Alas the paper is quite done.

Attend me on the margins.

I have not said a word about Italy; for indeed, my

dear Brother, except you there is nothing there that my thoughts turn upon ; and your position has in it the happy monotony (happy for your friends) of one at rest. Well do I understand those meditations of yours, those goings forth into the uttermost shores of being, those soundings into dim depths. Indulge not too much in them. For the rest, rejoice always that you have found footing ; prepare yourself not only to stand on it, but to build on it. I wish you had some more decisive occupation : but such is not appointed yet for a time. Meanwhile you are *not* idle, you are active as the scene allows ; many future years, I trust, will be the better for this leisure. Have you *any* company? Tell me whom. Give me descriptions of them, and "how they *ack i' the vaarious pleaces.*" Do you know Thorwaldsen at Rome personally ?

This Rennie seems to be intimate with him, and to love him well. He has cut a head of him, and has it here : the head of a man of energy and sensibility, with a *nose* of most honest simplicity. Go and see him, and try to get speech of him : a man of genius is always the best worth conferring with. . . . Jane, who is not very well this particular day, sends you her sisterly love. She takes well with Chelsea, and seems to be cheerfuller than she was wont.

And so, my dear Brother, here must I end. *Gehab' dich wohl ; leb' heiter ; lieb' mich.* May all good things be with you.—I must to Charing Cross where the Post is still open. *Felicissima notte!*—Ever your faithful Brother. T. C.

Rogers and Buonaparte

Byron is interested in Byron

(To Thomas Moore)

I

September 5, 1813

YOU need not tie yourself down to a day with Toderini, but send him at your leisure, having anatomised him into such annotations as you want; I do not believe that he has ever undergone that process before, which is the best reason for not sparing him now.

Rogers has returned to town, but not yet recovered of the *Quarterly*. What fellows these reviewers are! "these bugs do fear us all." They made you fight, and me (the milkiest of men) a satirist, and will end by making Rogers madder than Ajax. I have been reading *Memory* again, the other day, and *Hope* together, and retain all my preference of the former. His elegance is really wonderful—there is no such thing as a vulgar line in his book.

What say you to Buonaparte? Remember, I back him against the field, barring catalepsy and the elements. Nay, I almost wish him success against all countries but this,—were it only to choke the *Morning Post* or his undutiful father-in-law with that rebellious bastard of Scandinavian adoption, Bernadotte. Rogers wants me to go with him on a crusade to the Lakes, and to besiege you on our way. This last is a great temptation, but I fear it will not be in my power, unless you would go on with one of us somewhere—no matter where. It is too late for Matlock, but we might hit upon some scheme, high life, or low—the last would be much the best for amusement. I am so sick of the other, that I quite sigh for a cider-cellar, or a cruise in a smugglers' sloop.

You cannot wish more than I do that the fates were a little more accommodating to our parallel lives, which prolong *ad infinitum*, without coming a jot nearer. I almost wish I were married, too—which is saying much —all my friends, seniors and juniors, are in for it, and ask me to be godfather,—the only species of parentage which, I believe, will ever come to my share in a lawful way ; and, in an unlawful one, by the blessing of Lucina, we can never be certain,—though the parish may. I suppose I shall hear from you to-morrow, if not, this goes as it is, but I leave room for a P.S., in case anything requires an answer.—Ever, etc.

II

HASTINGS, *August* 3, 1814

BY the time this reaches your dwelling, I shall (God wot) be in town again probably. I have been here renewing my acquaintance with my old friend Ocean ; and I find his bosom as pleasant a pillow for an hour in the morning as his daughters to Paphos could be in the twilight. I have been swimming and eating turbot, smuggling neat brandies and silk handkerchiefs,—and listening to my friend Hodgson's raptures about a pretty wife-elect of his,—and walking on cliffs and tumbling down hills, and making the most of the *dolce far niente*, for the last fortnight. I met a son of Lord Erskine's, who says he has been married a year, and is the "happiest of men" ; and I have met the aforesaid H., who is also the "happiest of men" ; so, it is worth while being here, if only to witness the superlative felicity of these foxes, who have cut off their tails, and would persuade the rest to part with their brushes to keep them in countenance.

It rejoiceth me that you like *Lara*. Jeffrey is out

with his 45th number, which I suppose you have got. He is only too kind to me, in my share of it, and I begin to fancy myself a golden pheasant, upon the strength of the plumage wherewith he hath bedecked me. But then, *surgit amari*, etc.—the gentlemen of the *Champion*, and Perry, have got hold (I know not how) of the condolatory address to Lady Jersey on the picture-abduction by our Regent, and have published them—with my name, too, smack—without ever asking leave, or inquiring whether or no! Damn their impudence, and damn every thing. It has put me out of patience, and so, I shall say no more about it.

You shall have *Lara* and *Jacque* (both with some additions) when out; but I am still demurring and delaying, and in a fuss, and so is Rogers in his way.

Newstead is to be mine again. Claughton forfeits twenty-five thousand pounds; but that don't prevent me from being very prettily ruined. I mean to bury myself there—and let my beard grow—and hate you all.

Oh! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick minstrel and shepherd. He wants me to recommend him to Murray; and, speaking of his present bookseller, whose "bills" are never "lifted," he adds, *totidem verbis*, "God damn him and them both." I laughed, and so would you too, at the way in which this execration is introduced.

The said Hogg is a strange being, but of great, though uncouth, powers. I think very highly of him, as a poet; but he, and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours, are spoilt by living in little circles and petty societies. London and the world is the only place to take the conceit out of a man—in the milling phrase. Scott, he says, is gone to the Orkneys in a gale of wind;—during which wind, he affirms, the said Scott, he is sure, is

not at his ease,—to say the least of "it." Lord, Lord, if these home-keeping mushets had crossed your Atlantic or my Mediterranean, and tasted a little open boating in a white squall—or a gale in "the Gut"—or the "Bay of Biscay," with no gale at all—how it would enliven and introduce them to a few of the sensations—to say nothing of an illicit amour or two upon shore, in the way of essay upon the Passions, beginning with simple adultery, and compounding it as they went along.

I have forwarded your letter to Murray,—by the way, you had addressed it to Miller. Pray write to me, and say what art thou doing? "not pushed!"—Oons! how is this?—these "flaws and starts" must be "authorised by your grandam" and are unbecoming of any other author. I was sorry to hear of your discrepancy with the * *s, or rather your abjuration of agreement. I don't want to be impertinent, or buffoon on a serious subject, and am therefore at a loss what to say.

I hope nothing will induce you to abate from the proper price of your poem, as long as there is a prospect of getting it. For my own part, I have *seriously* and *not whiningly* (for that is not my way—at least, it used not to be), neither hopes, nor prospects, and scarcely even wishes. I am, in some respects, happy, but not in a manner that can or ought to last,—but enough of that. The worst of it is, I feel quite enervated and indifferent. I really do not know, if Jupiter were to offer me my choice of the contents of his benevolent cask, what I would pick out of it. If I was born, as the nurses say, with a "silver spoon in my mouth," it has stuck in my throat, and spoiled my palate, so that nothing put into it is swallowed with much relish,—unless it be cayenne.

However, I have grievances enough to occupy me that

way too ; but for fear of adding to yours by this pestilent long diatribe, I postpone the reading of them, *sine die*.

Ever, dear M., yours, etc.

P.S.—Don't forget my Godson. You could not have fixed on a fitter porter for his sins than me, being used to carry double without inconvenience. . . .

William Blake utters a manifesto

(To Thomas Butts)

FELPHAM, *November* 22, 1802

DEAR SIR,—My brother tells me that he fears you are offended with me. I fear so too, because there appears some reason why you might be so ; but when you have heard me out, you will not be so.

I have now given two years to the intense study of those parts of the art which relate to light and shade and colour, and am convinced that either my understanding is incapable of comprehending the beauties of colouring, or the pictures which I painted for you are equal in every part of the art, and superior in one, to anything that has been done since the age of Raphael.

All Sir J. Reynolds' Discourses to the Royal Academy will show that the Venetian finesse in art can never be united with the majesty of colouring necessary to historical beauty ; and in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, author of a work on picturesque scenery, he says thus :

"It may be worth consideration whether the epithet picturesque is not applicable to the excellences of the inferior schools rather than to the higher."

"The works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, etc., appear

to me to have nothing of it; whereas Rubens and the Venetian painters may almost be said to have nothing else."

"Perhaps *picturesque* is somewhat synonymous to the word taste, which we should think improperly applied to Homer or Milton, but very well to Prior or Pope. I suspect that the application of these words is to excellences of an inferior order, and which are incompatible with the grand style. You are certainly right in saying that variety of tints and forms is picturesque; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the reverse of this (*uniformity of colour* and a *long continuation of lines*) produces grandeur."

So says Sir Joshua, and so say I; for I have now proved that the parts of the art which I neglected to display, in those little pictures and drawings which I had the pleasure and profit to do for you, are incompatible with the designs.

There is nothing in the art which our painters do that I can confess myself ignorant of. I also know and understand, and can assuredly affirm, that the works I have done for you are equal to the Caracci or Raphael (and I am now some years older than Raphael was when he died). I say they are equal to Caracci or Raphael, or else I am blind, stupid, ignorant, and incapable, in two years' study, to understand those things which a boarding-school miss can comprehend in a fortnight. Be assured, my dear friend, that there is not one touch in those drawings and pictures but what came from my head and my heart in unison; that I am proud of being their author, and grateful to you my employer; and that I look upon you as the chief of my friends, whom I would endeavour to please, because you, among all men, have enabled me to produce these things. I would not

send you a drawing or a picture till I had again reconsidered my notions of art, and had put myself back as if I was a learner.

I have proved that I am right, and shall now go on with the vigour I was, in my childhood, famous for. But I do not pretend to be perfect: yet, if my works have faults, Caracci's, Correggio's, and Raphael's have faults also.

Let me observe that the yellow-leather flesh of old men, the ill-drawn and ugly old women, and, above all, the daubed black-and-yellow shadows that are found in most fine, ay, and the finest pictures, I altogether reject as ruinous to effect, though connoisseurs may think otherwise.

Let me also notice that Caracci's pictures are not like Correggio's, nor Correggio's like Raphael's; and, if neither of them was to be encouraged till he did like any of the others, he must die without encouragement. My pictures are unlike any of these painters, and I would have them to be so. I think the manner I adopt more perfect than any other. No doubt they thought the same of theirs. You will be tempted to think that, as I improve, the pictures, etc., that I did for you are not what I would now wish them to be.

On this I beg to say that they are what I intended them, and that I know I never shall do better; for, if I were to do them over again, they would lose as much as they gained, because they were done in the heat of my spirits.

But you will justly inquire why I have not written all this time to you. I answer I have been very unhappy, and could not think of troubling you about it, or any of my real friends. (I have written many letters to you which I burned and did not send.) And why I have not

before now finished the miniature I promised to Mrs. Butts, I answer I have not, till now, in any degree pleased myself, and now I must entreat you to excuse faults, for portrait-painting is the direct contrary to designing and historical painting, in every respect.

If you have not nature before you for every touch, you cannot paint portrait; and if you have nature before you at all, you cannot paint history. It was Michael Angelo's opinion, and is mine.

Pray give my wife's love with mine to Mrs. Butts. Assure her that it cannot be long before I have the pleasure of painting from you in person, and then she may expect a likeness. But now I have done all I could, and know she will forgive any failure in consideration of the endeavour.

And now let me finish with assuring you that, though I have been very unhappy, I am so no longer. I am again emerged into the light of day; I still and shall to eternity embrace Christianity, and adore Him who is the express image of God; but I have travelled through perils and darkness not unlike a champion. I have conquered, and shall go on conquering. Nothing can withstand the fury of my course among the stars of God and in the abysses of the accuser.

My enthusiasm is still what it was, only enlarged and confirmed.

I now send two pictures, and hope you will approve of them.

I have enclosed the account of money received and work done, which I ought long ago to have sent you. Pray forgive errors in omissions of this kind. I am incapable of many attentions which it is my duty to observe towards you, through multitude of employment, and through hope of soon seeing you again. I often

omit to inquire of you, but pray let me now hear how you do, and of the welfare of your family.

Accept my sincere love and respect.—I remain yours sincerely, WILLIAM BLAKE

A piece of seaweed serves for barometer, and gets wet and dry as the weather gets so.

Epistolary *Sententiæ*

MY chief philosophy has always been to do only what I deem pleasant. This is why I write to you. A. HOUSSAYE (to a lady)

OPINIONS is a species of property that I am always desirous of sharing with my friends.

CHARLES LAMB

IT is not always the giver who gives; it is not always the receiver who receives.

MALAY PROVERB

IT is a frail memory that remembers but present things.

BEN JONSON

WHEN I began this letter I thought I had something to say: but I believe the truth was I had nothing to do.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

LET us write oftener, and longer; and we shall not tempt the Fates by inchoating too long a hope of letter-paper

IBID.

A VERY good companion, a charitable man, and a friend to those that were good, and had a face like any blessing.

CERVANTES

THIS, too, is in our memories for ever—an addition to our stock—a light for memory to turn to when it wishes a beam upon its face.

LEIGH HUNT

A THANKFUL man owes a courtesie ever: the unthankful but when he needs it.

BEN JONSON

I LIVE between the folds of a sheet of paper.

EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN

X

LITERATURE AND ART

Haydon, Keats, and Shakespeare

March 1818

MY DEAR KEATS,—I shall go mad! In a field at Stratford-upon-Avon, that belonged to Shakespeare, they have found a gold ring and seal, with the initials W. S. and a true lover's knot between. If this is not Shakespeare, who is it?—A true lover's knot! I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible: as sure as that you breathe, and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him.

O Lord! B. R. HAYDON

TEIGNMOUTH, *Sunday Morning*

MY DEAR HAYDON,—In sooth I hope you are not too sanguine about that seal, in sooth I hope it is not Brummagem, in double sooth I hope it is his, and in triple sooth I hope I shall have an impression. Such a piece of intelligence came doubly welcome to me while in your own county and in your own hand, not but what I have blown up the said county for its watery qualifications.

The six first days I was here it did nothing but rain, and at that time having to write to a friend, I gave Devonshire a good blowing up; it has been fine for almost three days, and I was coming round a bit, but to-day it rains again.

With me the county is on its good behaviour. I have enjoyed the most delightful walks these three fine days, beautiful enough to make me content.

The Dean gives Mr. Pope news of *Gulliver* and himself

September 29, 1725

I AM now returning to the noble scene of Dublin, into the *grand monde*, for fear of burying my parts, to signalise myself among curates and vicars, and correct all corruptions crept in relating to the weight of bread and butter, through those dominions where I govern.

I have employed my time (besides ditching) in finishing, correcting, amending, and transcribing my *Travels* (*Gulliver's*), in four parts complete, newly augmented and intended for the press when the world shall deserve them, or rather when a printer shall be found brave enough to venture his ears. I like the scheme of our meeting after distresses and dispersions.

But the chief end I propose to myself in all my labours, is to vex the world, rather than divert it; and if I could compass that design without hurting my own person or fortune, I would be the most indefatigable writer you have ever seen without reading. I am exceedingly pleased that you have done with translations. Lord Treasurer Oxford often lamented that a rascally world should lay you under a necessity of misemploying your genius for so long a time. But since you will now

be so much better employed, when you think of the world, give it one lash the more at my request.

I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities; and all my love is towards individuals.

For instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers; but I love Counsellor Such-a-one, and Judge Such-a-one.

It is so with physicians. I will not speak of my own trade, soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest.

But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is the system upon which I have governed myself many years (but do not tell), and so I shall go on until I have done with them.

I have got materials toward a treatise proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale*, and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy (though not in Timon's manner) the whole building of my travels is erected; and I never will have peace of mind till all honest men are of my opinion.

By consequence you are to embrace it immediately, and procure that all who deserve my esteem may do so too.

The matter is so clear, that it will admit of no dispute; nay, I will hold a hundred pounds that you and I agree in the point. I did not know your *Odyssey* was finished, being yet in the country, which I shall leave in three days.

I thank you kindly for the present, but shall like it three-fourths the less for the mixture you mention of other hands; however, I am glad you saved yourself so much drudgery. I have been long told by Mr. Ford of your great achievements in building and planting, and especially of your subterranean passage to your

garden, whereby you turned a blunder into a beauty, which is a piece of *Ars Poetica*. I have almost done with Harridans, and shall soon become old enough to fall in love with girls of fourteen.

The lady whom you describe to live at court, to be deaf and no party woman, I take to be mythology, but I know not how to moralise it.

She cannot be Mercy, for Mercy is neither deaf nor lives at court; Justice is blind, and perhaps deaf, but neither is she a court-lady; Fortune is both blind and deaf, and a court-lady; but then she is a most damnable party woman, and will never make me easy as you promise.

It must be riches, which answers all your description. I am glad she visits you; but my voice is so weak, that I doubt she will never hear me.

Mr. Lewis sent me an account of Dr. Arbuthnot's illness, which is a very sensible affliction to me, who, by living so long out of the world, have lost that hardness of heart contracted by years and general conversation. I am daily losing friends, and neither seeking nor getting others.

Oh, if the world had but a dozen of Arbuthnots in it, I would burn my *Travels*! But, however, he is not without fault.

There is a passage in Bede, highly commending the piety and learning of the Irish in that age, where, after abundance of praises, he overthrows them all, by lamenting that, alas! they kept Easter at a wrong time of the year. So our Doctor has every quality and virtue that can make a man amiable or useful; but, alas, he hath a sort of slouch in his walk! I pray God protect him, for he is an excellent Christian, though not a Catholic.

I hear nothing of my friend Gay; but I find the court

keeps him at hard meat. I advised him to come over here with a Lord-Lieutenant. Phillips writes little flams (as Lord Leicester called those sort of verses) on Miss Carteret.

A Dublin blacksmith, a great poet, hath imitated his manner in a poem to the same Miss.

Phillips is a complainer; and on this occasion I told Lord Carteret, that complainers never succeeded at court, though railers do.

Are you altogether a country gentleman, that I must address you out of London, to the hazard of your losing this precious letter, which I will now conclude, although so much paper is left? I have an ill name and therefore shall not subscribe it; but you will guess it comes from one who esteems and loves you about half as much as you deserve, I mean as much as he can. I am in great concern, at what I am just told is in some of the newspapers, that Lord Bolingbroke is much hurt by a fall in hunting. I am glad he has so much youth and vigour left (of which he hath not been thrifty); but I wonder he has no more discretion.

Miss Edgeworth visits Sir Walter in Edinburgh

(To Mrs. Ruxton)

EDINBURGH, 32 ABERCROMBY PLACE
June 8, 1823

YOU have had our history up to Kinneil House. Mr. and Miss Stewart accompanied us some miles on our road to show us the palace of Linlithgow– very interesting to see, but not to describe. The drive from Linlithgow to Edinburgh is nothing extraordinary, but the road approaching the city is grand, and the first

view of the Castle and "mine own romantic town" delighted my companions; the day was fine and they were sitting outside on the barouche seat—a seat which you, my dear aunt, would not have envied them with all their fine prospects; by this approach to Edinburgh there are no suburbs; you drive at once through magnificent broad streets and fine squares—all the houses are of stone, darker than the Ardbraccain stone, and of a kind that is little injured by weather or time. Margaret Alison had taken lodgings for us in Abercromby Place—finely built, with hanging shrubbery garden, and the house as delightful as the situation. As soon as we had packed, and arranged our things the evening of our arrival, we walked, about ten minutes' distance from us, to our dear old friends the Alisons. We found them shawled and bonneted, just coming to see us.

Mr. Alison and Sir Walter Scott had settled that we should drive the first day after our arrival with Mr. Alison, which was just what we wished; but on our return home we found a note from Sir Walter:

"DEAR MISS EDGWORTH,—I have just received your kind note, just when I had persuaded myself it was most likely I should see you in person or hear of your arrival. Mr. Alison writes to me you are engaged to drive with him to-morrow, which puts Roslin out of the question for that day, as it might keep you late. On Sunday I hope you will join our family party at five, and on Monday I have asked one or two of the northern lights on purpose to meet you. I should be engrossing at any time, but we shall be more disposed to be so just now, because on the 12th I am under the necessity of going to a different kingdom (only the kingdom of *Fife*) for a day or two. To-morrow, if it is quite agreeable, I will wait on you about twelve, and hope you will permit me to show you some of our improvements.—I am always most respectfully yours, WALTER SCOTT

"EDINBURGH, *Friday*

"*P.S.*—Our old family coach is *licensed* to carry *six*; so take no care on that score. I enclose Mr. Alison's note; truly sorry I could not accept the invitation it contains.

"*P.S.*—My wife insists I shall add that the Laird of Staffa promised to look in on us this evening at eight or nine, for the purpose of letting us hear one of his clansmen sing some Highland boat songs and the like, and that if you will come, as the Irish should to the Scotch, without any ceremony, you will hear what is perhaps more curious than mellifluous. The man returns to the Isles to-morrow. There are no strangers with us; no party; none but all our own family and two old friends.

"Moreover, all our woman-kind have been calling it Gibb's hotel, so if you are not really tired and late, you have not even pride, the ladies' last defence, to oppose to this request. But, above all, do not fatigue yourself and the young ladies.

"No dressing to be thought of."

Ten o'clock struck as I read the note; we were tired —we were not fit to be seen; but I thought it right to accept "Walter Scott's" cordial invitation; sent for a hackney coach, and just as we were, without dressing, went. As the coach stopped, we saw the hall lighted, and the moment the door opened, heard the joyous sounds of loud singing. Three servants—"The Miss Edgeworths" sounded from hall to landing-place, and as I paused for a moment in the anteroom, I heard the first sound of Walter Scott's voice, "The Miss Edgeworths *come*."

The room was lighted by only one globe lamp. A circle were singing low and beating time. All stopped in an instant, and Walter Scott in the most cordial and courteous manner stepped forward to welcome us: "Miss Edgeworth, this is so kind of you!"

My first impression was that he was neither so large, nor so heavy in appearance, as I had been led to expect by description, bust, and picture. He is more lame than

I expected, but not unwieldy ; his countenance, even by the uncertain light in which I first saw it, pleased me much, benevolent and full of genius, without the slightest effort at expression ; delightfully natural, as if he did not know he was Walter Scott or the Great Unknown of the north, as if he only thought of making others happy.

After naming to us "Lady Scott, Staffa, my daughter Lockhart, Sophia, another daughter Anne, my son, my son-in-law Lockhart," just in the broken circle as they then stood, and showing me that only his family and his friends, Mr. Clarke and Mr. Sharpe, were present, he sat down for a minute beside me on a low sofa ; and on my saying, "Do not let us interrupt what was going on," he immediately rose and begged Staffa to bid his boatman strike up again. "Will you join in the circle with us?" He put the end of a silk handkerchief into my hand, and others into my sisters' ; they held these handkerchiefs all in their circle again, and the boatman began to roar out a Gaelic song, to which they all stamped in time and repeated the chorus, which, as far as I could hear, sounded like "*at am Vaun! at am Vaun!*" frequently repeated with prodigious enthusiasm. In another I could make out no intelligible sound but "Bar! bar! bar!" But the boatman's dark eyes were ready to start out of his head with rapture as he sang and stamped, and shook the handkerchief on each side, and the circle imitated.

Lady Scott is so exactly what I had heard her described, that it seemed as if we had seen her before. She must have been very handsome. French dark large eyes, civil and good-natured. Supper at a round table, a family supper, with attention to us, with sufficient and no more. The impression left on my mind this night is that Walter Scott is one of the best bred men I ever saw, with all the exquisite politeness which he knows so well

how to describe, which is of no particular school or country, but which is of all countries, the politeness which arises from good and quick sense and jesting, which seems to know by instinct the characters of others, to see what will please, and put all his guests at their ease. As I sat beside him at supper, I could not believe he was a stranger, and forgot he was a great man. Mr. Lockhart is very handsome, quite unlike his picture in *Peter's Letters.*

When we wakened in the morning, the whole scene of the preceding night seemed like a dream; however, at twelve came the real Lady Scott; and we called for Scott at the Parliament House, who came out of the Courts with joyous face as if he had nothing on earth to do or to think of, but to show us Edinburgh. Seeming to enjoy it all as much as he could, he carried us to Parliament House, Advocates' Library, Castle, and Holyrood House. His conversation all the time better than anything we could see, full of *à propos* anecdote, historic, serious or comic, just as occasion called for it, and all with a *bonhomie* and an ease that made us forget it was any trouble even to his lameness to mount flights of eternal stairs. Chantrey's statues of Lord Melville and President Blair are admirable. There is another by Roubillac of Duncan Forbes, which is excellent. Scott is enthusiastic about the beauties of Edinburgh, and well he may be, the most magnificent as well as the most romantic of cities.

We dined with the dear good Alisons. Mr. Alison met me at the drawing-room door, took me in his arms and gave me a hearty hug, and I do not think he is much altered, only that his locks are silvered over. At the dinner were, besides his two sons and two daughters and Mr. Alison, Mr. and Mrs. Skene. In one of Scott's

introductions to *Marmion* you will find Mr. Skene, Mr. Hope, the Scotch Solicitor-General (it is curious the Solicitor-Generals of Scotland and Ireland should be Hope and Joy !), Mr. Brewster, and Lord Meadowbank, and Mrs. Maconachie his wife. Mr. Alison wanted me to sit beside everybody, and I wanted to sit by him, and this I accomplished ; on the other side was Mr. Hope, whose head and character you will find in *Peter's Letters* : he was very entertaining. Sophy sat beside Mr. Brewster, and had a great deal of conversation with him.

Next day, Sunday, went to hear Mr. Alison ; his fine voice but little altered. To me he appears the best preacher I have ever heard. Dined at Scott's ; only his own family, his friend Skene, his wife and daughter, and Sir Henry Stewart ; I sat beside Scott. I dare not attempt at this moment even to think of any of the anecdotes he told, the fragments of poetry he repeated, or the observations on national character be made, lest I should be tempted to write some of them for you, and should never end this letter, which must be ended some time or other. His strong affection for his early friends and his country gives a power and charm to his conversation, which cannot be given by the polish of the London world or by the habit of literary conversation. *Quentin Durward* was lying on the table. Mrs. Skene took it up and said, "This is really too barefaced." Scott, when pointing to the hospital built by Heriot, said, "That was built by one Heriot, you know, the jeweller, in Charles the Second's time."

There was an arch simplicity in his look, at which we could hardly forbear laughing.

Scott's Hospitable Castle

Miss Edgeworth visits Sir Walter at Abbotsford

(To Mr. Ruxton)

ABBOTSFORD, *August* 9, 1823

I REMEMBER that you requested one of our party to write a few lines from Abbotsford. I think I mentioned to my aunt or Sophy the impression which I first experienced from Sir Walter Scott's great simplicity of manner, joined to his wonderful superiority of intellect. This impression has been strengthened by all I have seen of him since. In living with him in the country, I have particularly liked his behaviour towards his variety of guests, of all ranks, who came to his hospitable castle. Many of these are artists, painters, architects, mechanists, antiquarians, people who look up to him for patronage None of them permitted to be hangers-on or parasites, and his manners are perfectly kind, courteous, yet such as to command respect; and I never heard any one attempt to flatter him. I never saw an author less of an author in his habits. This I early observed, but have been the more struck with it the longer I have been with him. He has, indeed, such variety of occupations, that he has not time to think of his own works; how he has time to write them is a wonder. You would like him for his love of trees: a great part of his time out of doors is taken up in pruning his trees. I have within this hour heard a gentleman say to him, "You have had a great deal of experience in planting, Sir Walter; do you advise much thinning or not?"

"I should advise much thinning, but little at a time. If you thin much at a time, you let in the wind and hurt your trees."

I hope to show you a sketch of Abbotsford Sophy has made—better than my description.

Besides the abbey of Melrose, we have seen many interesting places in this neighbourhood.

To-day we have been a delightful drive through Ettrick Forest, and to the ruins of Newark—the hall of Newark, where the ladies bent their necks of snow to hear the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

Though great part of Ettrick Forest was cut down years ago, yet much of it has grown up again to respectable heights, and many most beautiful ash, oak, and alder trees remain. We had a happy walk by the river, and after refreshing ourselves with a luncheon in a summer-house, beautifully situated, we went to look at the ruins of Newark. It was a pity that this fine old building was let go to ruin, which it has done only within the last seventy years. The late Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, to whom it belonged, had in their youth lived abroad, and were so ignorant about their own estate in Scotland, that when they first came to live here they supposed there were no trees, and no wood they thought could be had, and brought with them, among other things, a barrel full of skewers for the cook.

It is very agreeable to observe how many friends of long-standing Scott has in the neighbourhood: they have been here, and we have been at their houses—very good houses, and the style of living excellent. Except one Prussian prince and one Swiss baron, no foreign visitors have been here; indeed, the house is in such a state of painting and papering, and carpenters finishing new rooms and chasing the inhabitants out of the old, that it was impossible to have much company.

Sir Walter's eldest son was here for some days—now gone back to Sandhurst. He is excessively shy, very

handsome, not at all literary, but he has sense and honourable principles, and is very grateful to those who were kind to him in Ireland.

His younger brother, Charles, who is now at home, has more easy manners, is more conversible, and has more of his father's literary taste.

I am sorry to say we are to leave Abbotsford the day after to-morrow; but the longer we stay the more sorry we shall feel to go. We had intended to have paid a visit to Lady Selkirk at St. Mary's Isle, but this would be a hundred miles out of our way, and I have no time for it, which I regret, as I liked very much the little I saw of Lady Selkirk in London.

Dr. John Brown meets Thackeray

28 Rutland Street
December 1851 or *January* 1852

MY DEAR COVENTRY,—I wish you had been here for the last fortnight to have seen, heard, and known Thackeray,—a fellow after your own heart,—a strong-headed, sound-hearted, judicious fellow, who knew the things that differ, and prefers Pope to Longfellow, and Mrs. Barrett Browning and Milton to Mr. Festus, and Sir Roger de Coverley to *Pickwick*, and David Hume's *History* to Sheriff Alison's, and the verses by E. V. K. to his friend in town to anything he has seen for a long time; and "the impassioned grape" to the whole work, prosaic and poetical, of Sir Bulwer Lytton. I have seen a great deal of him, and talked with him on all sorts of things, and next to yourself I know no man so much to my mind. He is much better and greater than his works.

His lectures have been very well attended, and I hope

he will carry off £300. I wish he could have taken as much from Glasgow, but this may not be found possible. He was so curious about you after sending these verses, which he liked exceedingly. He is 6 feet 3 in height, with a broad kindly face and an immense skull. Do you remember Dr. Henderson of Galashiels? He is ludicrously like him,—the same big head and broad face,—his voice is very like, and the same nicety in expression and in the cadences of the voice. He makes no figure in company, except as very good-humoured, and by saying now and then a quietly strong thing. I so much wish you had met him. He is as much bigger than Dickens as a three-decker of one hundred and twenty guns is bigger than a small steamer with one long-range swivel-gun. He has set everybody here a-reading *Stella's Journal*, *Gulliver*, the *Tatler*, *Joseph Andrews*, and *Humphrey Clinker*. He has a great turn for politics, right notions and keen desires, and from his kind of head would make a good public man. He has much in him which cannot find issue in mere authorship.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. B.

Thackeray praises Dickens to Mrs. Brookfield

Wednesday, 1849

WHAT have I been doing since these many days? I hardly know. I have written such a stupid number of *Pendennis* in consequence of not seeing you, that I shall be ruined if you are to stay away much longer . . . Has William written to you about our trip to Hampstead on Sunday? It was very pleasant. We went first to St. Mark's Church, where I always thought you went, but where the pew-opener had never heard of such a person

as Mrs. J. O. B.; and having heard a jolly and perfectly stupid sermon, walked over Primrose Hill to the Crowes, where his reverence gave Mrs. Crowe half an hour's private talk, whilst I was talking under the blossoming apple tree about newspapers to Monsieur Crowe. Well, Mrs. Crowe was delighted with William and his manner of *discoorsing* her; and indeed, though I say it that shouldn't, from what he said afterwards, and from what we have often talked over pipes in private, that is a pious and kind soul. I mean his, and calculated to soothe and comfort and appreciate and elevate, so to speak, out of despair, many a soul that your more tremendous, rigorous divines would leave on the wayside, where sin, that robber, had left them half-killed. I will have a Samaritan parson when I fall among thieves. You, dear lady, may send for an ascetic if you like; what is he to find wrong in you?

I have talked to my mother about her going to Paris with the children; she is very much pleased at the notion, and it won't be very lonely to me. I shall be alone for some months, at any rate,—and vow and swear I'll save money. . . .

Have you read Dickens? O, it is charming! brave Dickens! It has some of the very prettiest touches—those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place, it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the O. A.'s works, has been copying the O. A., and greatly simplifying his style and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer, and *David Copperfield* will be improved by taking a lesson from *Vanity Fair*. Secondly, it has put me upon my metal; for ah! madame, all the metal was out of me, and

I have been dreadfully and curiously cast down this month past. I say, secondly, it has put me on my metal, and made me feel I must do something; that I have fame and name and family to support. . .

Edward FitzGerald in a houseful of children

GELDESTONE HALL, BECCLES
Sunday, May 22/42

MY DEAR LAURENCE,—I read of the advertisements of sales and auctions, but don't envy you Londoners while I am here in the midst of *green idleness*, as Leigh Hunt might call it.

What are pictures? I am all for pure spirit. You have, of course, read the account of Spedding's forehead landing in America.

English sailors hail it in the Channel, mistaking it for Beachy Head. There is a Shakespeare Cliff, and a Spedding Cliff.

Good old fellow! I hope he'll come back safe and sound, forehead and all. I sit writing this at my bedroom window, while the rain (long looked for) patters on the window. I prophesied it to-day, which is a great comfort. We have a housefull of the most delightful children: and if the rain would last, and the grass grow, all would be well. I think the rain will last. I shall prophesy so when I go down to our early dinner. For it is Sunday: and we dine children and all at one o'clock: and go to afternoon church, and a great tea at six—then a pipe (except for the young ladies)—a stroll—a bit of supper—and to bed. Wake in the morning at five—open the window and read Ecclesiasticus. A proverb says that "everything is fun in the country." My Con-

stable has been greatly admired, and is reckoned quite genuine by our great judge, Mr. Churchyard. Mr. C. paints himself: (not in *body* colours, as you waggishly insinuate) and nicely too. He understands Gainsborough, Constable, and old Crome. Have you ever seen pictures by the latter? some very fine. He was a Norwich man.

William Blake reports progress

(To George Cumberland)

April 12, 1827

I HAVE been very near the gates of death, and have returned very weak, and an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth for ever. In that I am stronger and stronger, as this foolish body decays. I thank you for the pains you have taken with poor *Job*. I know too well that the great majority of Englishmen are fond of the indefinite, which they measure by Newton's doctrine of the fluxions of an atom, a thing which does not exist. These are politicians, and think that republican art is inimical to their atom, for a line or a lineament is not formed by chance. A line is a line in its minutest subdivisions, straight or crooked. It is itself, not intermeasurable by anything else. Such is *Job*. But since the French Revolution Englishmen are all intermeasurable by one another: certainly a happy state of agreement, in which I for one do not agree. God keep you and me from the divinity of yes, and no too—the yea, nay, creeping Jesus—from supposing up and down to be the same thing, as all experimentalists must suppose.

You are desirous, I know, to dispose of some of my works, but having none remaining of all I have printed,

I cannot print more except at a great loss. I am now painting a set of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* for a friend at ten guineas. The last work I produced is a poem entitled *Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion*, but find that to print it will cost my time the amount of twenty guineas. One I have finished, but it is not likely I shall find a customer for it. As you wish me to send you a list with the prices, they are as follows :

	£	S.	D.
America	6	6	0
Europe	6	6	0
Visions, etc..	5	5	0
Thel	3	3	0
Songs of Innocence and Experience .	10	10	0
Urizen	6	6	0

The little Card I will do as soon as possible !

Edward FitzGerald describes his Sir Joshua

1869

DEAR MRS. THOMPSON,—(I must get a new Pen for you—which doesn't promise to act as well as the old one—Try another).

Dear Mrs. Thompson—Mistress of Trinity—(this does better)—I am both sorry, and glad, that you wrote me the Letter you have written to me : sorry, because I think it was an effort to you, disabled as you are ; and glad, I need not say why.

I despatched Spedding's letter to your Master yesterday ; I daresay you have read it : for there was nothing extraordinary wicked in it. But, he to talk of *my* perversity ! . . .

"My Sir Joshua is a darling"

My Sir Joshua is a darling. A pretty young Woman ("Girl" I won't call her) sitting with a turtle-dove in her lap, while its mate is supposed to be flying down to it from the window. I say "supposed," for Sir J., who didn't know much of the drawing of Birds, any more than of Men and Women, has made a thing like a stuffed Bird clawing down like a Parrot. But then, the colour, the Dove-colour, subdued so as to carry off the richer tints of the dear Girl's dress; and she, too, pensive, not sentimental: a Lady, as her Painter was a Gentleman.

Faded as it is in the face (the Lake, which he would use, having partially flown), it is one of the most beautiful things of his I have seen: more varied in colour; not the simple cream-white dress he was fond of, but with a light gold-threaded Scarf, a blue sash, a green chair, etc. . . .

I was rather taken aback by the Master's having discovered my last—yes, and *bonâ-fide* my last—translation in the volume I sent to your Library. I thought it would slip in unobserved, and I should have given all my little contributions to my old College, without after-reckoning. Had I known you as the Wife of any but the "quondam" Greek Professor, I should very likely have sent it to you: since it was meant for those who might wish for some insight into a Play which I must think they can scarcely have been tempted into before by any previous Translation. It remains to be much better done; but if Women of Sense and Taste, and Men of Sense and Taste (who don't know Greek) can read, and be interested in such a glimpse as I give them of the Original, they must be content, and not look the Horse too close in the mouth, till a better comes to hand.

My Lugger has had (along with her neighbours) such a Season of Winds as no one remembers. We made

£450 in the North Sea; and (just for fun) I did wish to realise £5 in my Pocket. But my Captain would take it all to pay Bills. But if he makes another £400 this Home Voyage! Oh, then we shall have money in our Pockets. I do wish this. For the anxiety about all these People's lives has been so much more to me than all the amusement I have got from the Business, that I think I will draw out of it if I can see my Captain sufficiently firm on his legs to carry it on alone. True, there will then be the same risk to him and his ten men, but they don't care; only I sit here listening to the Winds in the Chimney and always thinking of the eleven hanging at my own fingers' ends. This letter is all desperately about me and mine, Translations and Ships. And now I am going to walk in *my* Garden: and feed *my* Captain's Pony with white Carrots; and in the Evening have my Lad come and read for an hour and a half (he stumbles at every third word, and gets dreadfully tired, and so do I; but I renovate him with Cake and Sweet Wine, and I can't just now smoke the Pipe nor drink the Grog. "These are my Troubles, Mr. Wesley," but I am still the Master's and Mistress's loyal Servant,

EDWARD FITZGERALD[1]

[1] There is an ἦθος in FitzGerald's letters which is so exquisitely idyllic as to be almost heavenly. He takes you with him, exactly accommodating his pace to yours, walks through meadows so tranquil, and yet abounding in the most delicate surprises. And these surprises seem so familiar, just as if they had originated with yourself. What delicious blending! What a perfect interweft of thought and diction! What a sweet companion!—*T. E. Brown to S. T. Irwin.*

XI

GUESTS AND THE PLAY

Macaulay describes his first visit to Holland House

LONDON, *June* 1, 1831

MY DEAR SISTER,—My last letter was a dull one. I mean this to be very amusing. My last was about Basinghall Street, attorneys, and bankrupts. But for this—take it dramatically in the German style.

Fine morning. Scene, the great entrance of Holland House

Enter MACAULAY *and* TWO FOOTMEN *in livery*

First Footman. Sir, may I venture to demand your name?

Macaulay. Macaulay, and thereto I add M.P.
And that addition, even in these proud halls,
May well ensure the bearer some respect.

Second Footman. And art thou come to breakfast with our Lord?

Macaulay. I am: for so his hospitable will,
And hers—the peerless dame ye serve—hath bade.

First Footman. Ascend the stair, and thou above shalt find,
On snow-white linen spread, the luscious meal.
[*Exit* MACAULAY *upstairs*

In plain English prose, I went this morning to breakfast at Holland House. The day was fine, and I arrived at twenty minutes after ten. After I had lounged a short time in the dining-room, I heard a gruff good-natured voice asking, "Where is Mr. Macaulay? Where have you put him?" and in his arm-chair Lord Holland was wheeled in. He took me round the apartments, he riding and I walking. He gave me the history of the most remarkable portraits in the library, where there is, by the bye, one of the few bad pieces of Lawrence that I have seen—a head of Charles James Fox, an ignominious failure. Lord Holland said that it was the worst ever painted of so eminent a man by so eminent an artist. There is a very fine head of Machiavelli, and another of Earl Grey, a very different sort of man. I observed a portrait of Lady Holland painted some thirty years ago. I could have cried to see the change. She must have been a most beautiful woman. She still looks, however, as if she had been handsome, and shows in one respect great taste and sense. She does not rouge at all; and her costume is not youthful, so that she looks as well in the morning as in the evening. We came back to the dining-room. Our breakfast party consisted of my Lord and Lady, myself, Lord Russell, and Luttrell. You must have heard of Luttrell. I met him once at Rogers's; and I have seen him, I think, in other places. He is a famous wit,—the most popular, I think, of all the professed wits,—a man who has lived in the highest circles, a scholar, and no contemptible poet. He wrote a little

volume of verse entitled *Advice to Julia*, — not first rate, but neat, lively, piquant, and showing the most consummate knowledge of fashionable life.

We breakfasted on very good coffee, and very good tea, and very good eggs, butter kept in the midst of ice, and hot rolls. Lady Holland told us her dreams ; how she had dreamed that a mad dog bit her foot, and how she set off to Brodie, and lost her way in St. Martin's Lane, and could not find him. She hoped, she said, the dream would not come true. I said that I had had a dream which admitted of no such hope ; for I had dreamed that I heard Pollock speak in the House of Commons, that the speech was very long, and that he was coughed down. This dream of mine diverted them much.

After breakfast Lady Holland offered to conduct me to her own drawing-room, or, rather, commanded my attendance. A very beautiful room it is, opening on a terrace, and wainscotted with miniature paintings interesting from their merit, and interesting from their history. Among them I remarked a great many,— thirty I should think,—which even I, who am no great connoisseur, saw at once could come from no hand but Stothard's. They were all on subjects from Lord Byron's poems. "Yes," said she, "poor Lord Byron sent them to me a short time before the separation. I sent them back, and told him that, if he gave them away, he ought to give them to Lady Byron. But he said that he would not, and that, if I did not take them, the bailiffs would, and that they would be lost in the wreck." Her ladyship then honoured me so far as to conduct me through her dressing-room into the great family bedchamber, to show me a very fine picture by Reynolds, of Fox, when a boy, birds-nesting. She then

consigned me to Luttrell, asking him to show me the grounds.

Through the grounds we went, and very pretty I thought them. In the Dutch garden is a fine bronze bust of Napoleon, which Lord Holland put up in 1817, while Napoleon was a prisoner at St. Helena. The inscription was selected by his lordship, and is remarkably happy. It is from Homer's Odyssey. I will translate it, as well as I can extempore, into a measure which gives a better idea of Homer's manner than Pope's sing-song couplet.

> "For not, be sure, within the grave
> Is hid that prince, the wise, the brave;
> But in an islet's narrow bound,
> With the great Ocean roaring round,
> The captive of a foeman base
> He pines to view his native place."

There is a seat near the spot which is called Rogers's seat. The poet loves, it seems, to sit there. A very elegant inscription by Lord Holland is placed over it:

> "Here Rogers sate; and here for ever dwell
> With me those pleasures which he sang so well."

Very neat and condensed, I think. Another inscription by Luttrell hangs there. Luttrell adjured me with mock pathos to spare his blushes; but I am author enough to know what the blushes of authors mean. So I read the lines, and very pretty and polished they were, but too many to be remembered from one reading.

Having gone round the grounds I took my leave, very much pleased with the place. Lord Holland is extremely kind. But that is of course; for he is kindness itself.

Her ladyship too, which is by no means of course,[1] is all graciousness and civility. But, for all this, I would much rather be quietly walking with you; and the great use of going to these fine places is to learn how happy it is possible to be without them. Indeed, I care so little for them that I certainly should not have gone to-day, but that I thought I should be able to find materials for a letter which you might like.—Farewell,

T. B. Macaulay

Charles Lamb among the Blue-Stockings

(To S. T. Coleridge)

Probably April 16 *or* 17, 1800

I SEND you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget

[1] Lady Holland could be very terrifying. Sydney Smith has some good fun about it in a letter to Lady Ashburton in 1836:—

"Mr. and Mrs. —— dined at —— yesterday. I sat next to Mr. ——. His voice faltered and he looked pale: I did all I could to encourage him; made him take quantities of sherry. Mrs. —— also looked very unhappy, and I had no doubt took the H. H. draught when she went home. You know, perhaps, that there is a particular draught which the London apothecaries give to persons who have been frightened at H. H. They will both tell you that they were not at all frightened, but don't believe them; I have seen so much of the disorder, that I am never mistaken. However, don't let me make you uneasy; it generally goes off after a day or two, and rarely does any permanent injury to the constitution."

to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon "Realities." We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benje, or Benjey—I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. "The rogue has given me potions to make me love him." Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pairs of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benje broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from D'Israeli, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of

organisation. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ ; but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics ; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry ; where I, who had hitherto sat mute and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way by the severity of his critical strictures in his *Lives of the Poets*. I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured "it was certainly the case." Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss Benjey's friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself—in the opinion of Miss Benjey, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates against the authority of Shakespeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of

Pizarro, and Miss Benjey or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim*; which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

The Rev. Sydney Smith declines two invitations

I

(To Mrs. Meynell)

GREEN STREET, *June*, 1840

THY servant is threescore-and-ten years old; can he hear the sound of singing men and singing women? A Canon at the Opera! Where have you lived? In what habitations of the heathen? I thank you, shuddering; and am ever your unseducible friend,

SYDNEY SMITH

II

ENGAGED, my dear Miss Berry, up to the teeth on Saturday, or should be too happy. It gives me great comfort that you are recovered. I would not have survived you. To precipitate myself from the pulpit of Paul was the peculiar mode of destruction on which I had resolved.—Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH

"Once is Enough"

Cicero entertains Cæsar

(To Atticus)

O THIS visitor so much dreaded! And yet one whose visit I am not sorry to have received; for it went off most pleasantly.

When we came the evening before, on the 18th, to my neighbour Philippus, the house was so crowded with soldiers, that there was hardly a vacant room for Cæsar to sup in. There were about two thousand of them, which made me feel no little uneasiness for the next day. But Barba Cussius set me at ease. He assigned me a guard; made the rest encamp in the fields; so that my house was kept clear. On the 19th, he staid with Philippus till 1 o'clock; but admitted nobody. He was settling accounts, as I suppose, with Balbus. He then walked by the shore to my house. At two he took the bath. The verses on Mamuna were then read to him. His countenance was unchanged. He was rubbed, and anointed, and then he disposed himself at table, after taking an emetic; and ate and drank in a very free and easy manner; for he was entertained hospitably and elegantly; and our discourse resembled our repast in its relish and seasoning.

Besides Cæsar's table, his attendants were well provided for in three other rooms; nor was there any deficiency in the provision made for his freedmen of lower quality, and his slaves; but those of the better sort were elegantly entertained. Need I add more. I acted as man with man. Yet he was not the man to whom one would say at parting, "I pray let me have this visit repeated when you come this way again." Once is enough. Not a word passed between us on business, but much literary talk. To make short of the

matter, he was perfectly pleased and easy. He talked of spending one day at Puteoli; another at Baiæ. You have thus the account of the day's entertainment—an entertainment not agreeable, but still not troublesome to me. I shall stay here a little longer, and then to Tusculum.

As he passed by Dolabella's villa, his troops marched close by the side of this house, on the right and left; which was done nowhere else.

I had this from Nicias.

Charles Lamb returns thanks for a little pig

(To Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Collier)

Twelfth Day [*January* 6], 1823

THE pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy.

There was some contention as to who should have the ears, but in spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice) I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a favour. Generally those petty toes, pretty toes! are missing. But I suppose he wore them, to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been Chinese, and a female.—

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes, seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

John Collier junr. has sent me a Poem which (without

the smallest bias from the aforesaid present, believe me) I pronounce *sterling*.

I set about Evelyn, and finished the first volume in the course of a natural day. To-day I attack the second.—Parts are very interesting.—

I left a blank at top of my letter, not being determined *which* to address it to, so Farmer and Farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

VIVE L'AGRICULTURE!

Frank Field's marriage of course you have seen in the papers, and that his brother Barron is expected home.

> How do you make your pigs so little?
> They are vastly engaging at that age.
> I was so myself.
> Now I am a disagreeable old hog—
> A middle-aged-gentleman-and-a-half.

My faculties, thank God, are not much impaired. I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's Prayer in the common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

Believe me, while my faculties last, a proper appreciator of your many kindnesses in this way; and that the last lingering relish of past flavours upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little Ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns (not of the Pig) but of the New Year to both.—

Mary for her share of the Pig and the memoirs desires to send the same—Dear Mr. C. and Mrs. C.—Yours truly, C. LAMB

A Banquet indeed

Pliny tells Septitius Clarus what he has missed

HOW happened it, my friend, that you did not keep your engagement the other night to sup with me? But take notice, justice is to be had, and I expect you shall fully reimburse me the expense I was at to treat you; which, let me tell you, was no small sum. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce apiece, three snails, two eggs, and a barley cake, with some sweet wine and snow; the snow most certainly I shall charge to your account, as a rarity that will not keep. Besides all these curious dishes, there were olives of Andalusia, gourds, shalots, and a hundred other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, as you liked best; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the luxurious delicacies and Spanish dancers of a certain—I know not who, were, it seems, more to your taste. However, I shall have my revenge of you, depend upon it;—in what manner, shall be at present a secret. In good truth it was not kind thus to mortify your friend,—I had almost said yourself;—and, upon second thoughts, I do say so: for how agreeably should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and deep speculation! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but you can nowhere be treated with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity and freedom; only make the experiment; and if you do not ever afterwards prefer my table to any other, never favour me with your company again. Farewell.

A Piece at the Ambigu

The Rev. Sydney Smith thanks Mr. Arthur Kinglake for a book, and enlarges on digestion

COMBE FLOREY, *September* 30, 1837

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged by the present of your brother's book. I am convinced digestion is the great secret of life; and that character, talents, virtues, and qualities are powerfully affected by beef, mutton, pie-crust, and rich soups. I have often thought I could feed or starve men into many virtues and vices, and affect them more powerfully with my instruments of cookery than Timotheus could do formerly with his lyre.—Ever yours very truly, SYDNEY SMITH

Charles Dickens at a French melodrama

49 CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS
Monday, January 7, 1856

MY DEAR MARK [LEMON],—In a piece at the Ambigu, called the *Rentrée à Paris*, a mere scene in honour of the return of the troops from the Crimea the other day, there is a novelty which I think it worth letting you know of, as it is easily available, either for a serious or a comic interest—the introduction of a supposed electric telegraph. The scene is the railway terminus at Paris, with the electric telegraph office on the prompt side, and the clerks *with their backs to the audience*—much more real than if they were, as they infallibly would be, staring about the house—working the needles; and the little bell perpetually ringing. There are assembled to greet the soldiers, all the easily and naturally imagined elements of interest—old veteran fathers, young children, agonised mothers, sisters and brothers, girl lovers—each impatient to know

of his or her own object of solicitude. Enter to these a certain marquis, full of sympathy for all, who says: "My friends, I am one of you. My brother has no commission yet. He is a common soldier. I wait for him as well as all brothers and sisters here wait for *their* brothers. Tell me whom you are expecting." Then they all tell him. Then he goes into the telegraph-office; and sends a message down the line to know how long the troops will be. Bell rings. Answer handed out on slip of paper. "Delay on the line. Troops will not arrive for a quarter of an hour." General disappointment. "But we have this brave electric telegraph, my friends," says the marquis. "Give me your little messages, and I'll send them off." General rush round the marquis. Exclamations: "How's Henri?" "My love to Georges;" "Has Guillaume forgotten Elise?" "Is my son wounded?" "Is my brother promoted?" etc. etc. Marquis composes tumult. Sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Elise's love to Georges." Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out—"Georges in ten minutes will embrace his Elise. Sends her a thousand kisses." Marquis sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Is my son wounded?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out—"No. He has not yet upon him those marks of bravery in the glorious service of his country which his dear old father bears" (father being lamed and invalided). Last of all the widowed mother. Marquis sends message—such a regiment, such a company—"Is my only son safe?" Little bell rings. Slip of paper handed out—"He was first upon the heights of Alma." General cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made a sergeant at Inkermann." Another cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was made colour-sergeant at Sebastopol." Another cheer

Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "He was the first man who leaped with the French banner on the Malakhoff tower." Tremendous cheer. Bell rings again, another slip of paper handed out. "But he was struck down there by a musket-ball, and—— Troops have proceeded. Will arrive in half a minute after this." Mother abandons all hope; general commiseration; troops rush in, down a platform; son only wounded, and embraces her.

As I have said, and as you will see, this is available for any purpose. But done with equal distinction and rapidity, it is a tremendous effect, and got by the simplest means in the world. There is nothing in the piece, but it was impossible not to be moved and excited by the telegraph part of it.

I have written to Beaucourt about taking that breezy house—a little improved—for the summer, and I hope you and yours will come there often and stay there long. My present idea, if nothing should arise to uproot me sooner, is to stay here until the middle of May, then plant the family at Boulogne, and come with Catherine and Georgy home for two or three weeks.

We are up to our knees in mud here. Literally in vehement despair, I walked down the avenue outside the Barrière de l'Étoile here yesterday, and went straight on among the trees. I came back with top-boots of mud on. Nothing will cleanse the streets.

Numbers of men and women are for ever scooping and sweeping in them, and they are always one lake of yellow mud. All my trousers go to the tailor's every day, and are ravelled out at the heels every night. Washing is awful.

Tell Mrs. Lemon, with my love, that I have bought her some Eau D'Or, in grateful remembrance of her

knowing what it is, and crushing the tyrant of her existence by resolutely refusing to be put down when that monster would have silenced her. You may imagine the loves and messages that are now being poured in upon me by all of them, so I will give none of them; though I am pretending to be very scrupulous about it, and am looking (I have no doubt) as if I were writing them down with the greatest care.—Ever affectionately.

Thackeray describes to Mrs. Brookfield his adventures in a Paris theatre

PARIS, *Tuesday*, *September* 4, 1849

PERHAPS [through] my intolerable meanness and blundering, you will not get any letter from me till to-morrow. On Sunday, the man who was to take the letter failed me; yesterday I went with it in a cab to the Grande Poste, which is a mile off, and where you have to go to pay. The cab-horse was lame, and we arrived two minutes too late; I put the letter into the unpaid letter-box; I dismissed the poor old broken cab-horse, behind which it was agonizing to sit; in fine it was a failure

When I got to dinner at my aunt's, I found all was over. Mrs. H. died on Sunday night in her sleep, quite without pain, or any knowledge of the transition. I went and sat with her husband, an old fellow of seventy-two, and found him bearing his calamity in a very honest manly way. What do you think the old gentleman was doing? Well, he was drinking gin and water, and I had some too, telling his valet to make me some. Man thought this was a master stroke of diplomacy, and evidently thinks I have arrived to take possession as heir, but I know nothing about

money matters as yet, and think that the old gentleman at least will have the enjoyment of my aunt's property during life. He told me some family secrets, in which persons of repute figure not honorably. Ah! they shock me to think of. Pray, have you ever committed any roguery in money matters? Has William? Have I? I am more likely to do it than he, that honest man, not having his resolution or self-denial. But I've not as yet, beyond the roguery of not saving perhaps, which is knavish too. I am very glad I came to see my dearest old aunt. She is such a kind tender creature, laws bless us, how fond she would be of you. I was going to begin about William and say "Do you remember a friend of mine who came to dine at the Thermes; and sang the song about the Mogul, and the blue bottle fly?" but modesty forbade, and I was dumb.

Since this was written in the afternoon, I suppose if there has been one virtuous man in Paris, it is madame's most *obajient* servant. I went to sit with Mr. H., and found him taking what he calls his tiffin in great comfort (tiffin is the meal which I have sometimes had the honour of sharing with you at one o'clock) and this transacted, —— and I didn't have any tiffin; having consumed a good breakfast two hours previously—I went up a hundred stairs at least, to Miss B. H's airy apartment, and found her and her sister, and sat for an hour—she asked after you so warmly that I was quite pleased; she said she had the highest respect for you. I was glad to find somebody who knew you; and all I can say is, if you fancy I like being here better than in London, you are in a pleasing error.

Then I went to see a friend of my mother's, then to have a very good dinner at the Café de Paris, where

I had *potage à la pourpart*, think of *pourpart* soup. We had it merely for the sake of the name, and it was uncommonly good. Then back to old H. again, to bawl into his ears for an hour and a half; then to drink tea with my aunt—why, life has been a series of sacrifices to-day, and I must be written up in the book of good works. For I should have liked to go to the play, and follow my own devices best, but for that stern sentiment of duty, which fitfully comes over the most abandoned of men at times.

All the time I was with Mr. H. in the morning, what do you think they were doing in the next room? It was like a novel. They were rapping at a coffin in the bedroom, but he was too deaf to hear, and seems too old to care very much. Ah! dear lady, I hope you are sleeping happily at this hour, and you and Mr. Williams, and another party who is nameless, shall have all the benefits of an old sinner's prayers.

I suppose I was too virtuous on Tuesday, for yesterday I got back to my old selfish ways again, and did what I liked from morning till night.

This self-indulgence though entire was not criminal; at first at least, but I shall come to the painful part of my memoirs presently. All the forenoon I read with intense delight, a novel called *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, a continuation of the famous *Mousquetaires* and just as interesting; keeping me panting from volume to volume, and longing for more.

This done, and after a walk and some visits, read more novels, *David Copperfield* to wit, in which there is a charming bit of insanity, and which I begin to believe is the very best thing the author has yet done. Then to the *Variétés* Theatre, to see the play *Chamléon*, after which all Paris is running, a general satire upon

the last 60 years. Everything is satirised, Louis XVI., the Convention, the Empire, the Restoration, etc.; the barricades, at which these people were murdering each other only yesterday—it's awful, immodest, surpasses my cynicism altogether. At the end of the piece they pretend to bring in the author, and a little child who can just speak, comes in and sings a satiric song, in a feeble, tender, infantine pipe, which seemed to me as impious as the whole of the rest of the piece. They don't care for anything, not religion, not bravery, not liberty, not great men, not modesty. Ah! madame, what a great moralist somebody is, and what *moighty foine* principles *entoirely* he has!

But now, with a blush upon my damask cheek, I come to the adventures of the day. You must know that I went to the play with an old comrade, Roger de Beauvoir, an ex-dandy and man of letters, who talked incessantly during the whole of dinner-time, as I remember, though I can't for the life of me recall what he said. Well, we went together to the green-room. I have never been in a French green-room before, and was not much excited, but when he proposed to take me to the *loge* of a beautiful actress with sparkling eyes and the prettiest little *retroussé* nosey-posey in the world, I said to the *régisseur* of the theatre, "lead on!" and we went through passages and upstairs to the *loge*, which is not a box, but O! gracious goodness, a dressing room!——

She had just taken off her rouge, her complexion was only a thousand times more brilliant, perhaps the *peignoir* of black satin which partially enveloped her perfect form, only served to heighten etc., which it could but partially do etc. Her lips are really as red as etc., and not covered with paint at all. Her voice

is delicious. Her eyes O! they flashed etc. upon me, and I felt my etc. beating so that I could hardly speak. I pitched in, if you will permit me the phrase, two or three compliments however, very large and heavy, of the good only English sort, and O! *mon dieu* she has asked me to go and see her. Shall I go, or shan't I? Shall I go this very day at 4 o'clock or shall I not? Well, I won't tell you, I will put up my letter before 4, and keep this piece of intelligence for the next packet.

The funeral takes place to-morrow, and as I don't seem to do much work here, I shall be soon probably on the wing, but perhaps I will take a week's touring somewhere about France, Tours, and Nantes perhaps or elsewhere, or anywhere, I don't know, but I hope before I go to hear once more from you. I am happy indeed to hear how well you are. What a shame it was to assault my dear lady with my blue devils. Who could help looking to the day of failing powers, but if I last a few years, no doubt I can get a shelter somewhere against that certain adversity, and so I ought not to show you my glum face or my dismal feelings. That's the worst of habit and confidence. You are so kind to me that I like to tell you all, and to think that in good or ill fortune I have your sympathy. Here's an opportunity for sentiment, here's just a little bit of the page left to say something neat and pretty.

Je les méprise les jolis mots, vous en ai-je jamais fait de ma vie? Je les laisse à Monsieur Bullar et ses pareils—j'en ferai pour Mademoiselle Page, pour la ravissante la sémillante la frétillante Adèle (c'est ainsi qu'elle se nomme) mais pour vous? Allons—partons —il est quatre heures—fermons la lettre—disons adieu, l'amie et moi—vous m'ecrirez avant mon départ n'est-

ce-pas? Allez bien, dormez bien, marchez bien, s'il vous plait, et gardy mwaw ung petty moreso der voter cure. W. M. T.

Charles Lamb confesses to a night of it

(To Dr. Asbury)

DEAR SIR,—It is an observation of a wise man that "moderation is best in all things." I cannot agree with him "in liquor." There is a smoothness and oiliness in wine that makes it go down by a natural channel, which I am positive was made for that descending. Else, why does not wine choke us? could Nature have made that sloping lane, not to facilitate the downgoing? She does nothing in vain. You know that better than I. You know how often she has helped you at a dead lift, and how much better entitled she is to a fee than yourself sometimes, when you carry off the credit. Still there is something due to manners and customs, and I should apologise to you and Mrs. Asbury for being absolutely carried home upon a man's shoulders thro' Silver Street, up Parson's Lane, by the Chapels (which might have taught me better), and then to be deposited like a dead log at Gaffar Westwood's, who it seems does not "insure" against intoxication. Not that the mode of conveyance is objectionable. On the contrary, it is more easy than a one-horse chaise. Ariel in the *Tempest* says

"On a Bat's back do I fly, after sunset merrily."

Now I take it that Ariel must sometimes have stayed out late of nights. Indeed, he pretends that "where

the bee sucks, there lurks he," as much as to say that his suction is as innocent as that little innocent (but damnably stinging when he is provok'd) winged creature. But I take it, that Ariel was fond of metheglin, of which the Bees are notorious Brewers. But then you will say: What a shocking sight to see a middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half riding upon a Gentleman's back up Parson's Lane at midnight! Exactly the time for that sort of conveyance, when nobody can see him, nobody but Heaven and his own conscience; now Heaven makes fools, and don't expect much from her own creation; and as for conscience, She and I have long since come to a compromise. I have given up false modesty, and she allows me to abate a little of the true. I like to be liked, but I don't care about being respected. I don't respect myself. But, as I was saying, I thought he would have let me down just as we got to Lieutenant Barker's Coal-shed (or emporium), but by a cunning jerk I eased myself, and righted my posture. I protest, I thought myself in a palanquin, and never felt myself so grandly carried. It was a slave under me. There was I, all but my reason. And what is reason? and what is the loss of it? and how often in a day do we do without it, just as well? Reason is only counting, two and two makes four. And if on my passage home, I thought it made five, what matter? Two and two will just make four, as it always did, before I took the finishing glass that did my business. My sister has begged me to write an apology to Mrs. A. and you for disgracing your party; now it does seem to me, that I rather honoured your party, for every one that was not drunk (and one or two of the ladies, I am sure, were not) must have been set off greatly in the contrast to me. I was the

scapegoat. The soberer they seemed. By the way, is magnesia good on these occasions? *iii* pol: med: sum: ante noct: in rub: can:. I am no licentiate, but know enough of simples to beg you to send me a draught after this model. But still you will say (or the men and maids at your house will say) that it is not a seemly sight for an old gentleman to go home pick-a-back. Well, may be it is not. But I never studied grace. I take it to be a mere superficial accomplishment. I regard more the internal acquisitions. The great object after supper is to get home, and whether that is obtained in a horizontal posture or perpendicular (as foolish men and apes affect for dignity), I think is little to the purpose. The end is always greater than the means. Here I am, able to compose a sensible rational apology, and what signifies how I got here? I have just sense enough to remember I was very happy last night, and to thank our kind host and hostess, and that's sense enough, I hope.

CHARLES LAMB

N.B.—What is good for a desperate head-ache? Why, patience, and a determination not to mind being miserable all day long. And that I have made my mind up to. So, here goes. It is better than not being alive at all, which I might have been, had your man toppled me down at Lieut. Barker's Coal-shed. My sister sends her sober compliments to Mrs. A. She is not much the worse.—Yours truly,

C. LAMB

REMEMBER my unalterable maxim, when we love, we have always something to say.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

THE English do not generally love Letter writing: and very few of us like it the more as we get older.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

7¼ P.M.—After a stroll in mine own Garden, under the moon—shoes kicked off—Slippers and Dressing Gown on—a Pinch of Snuff—and hey for a Letter—to my only London Correspondent! *IBID.*

I HAVE a constancy in my nature that makes me always remember my old friends.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

A Conclusion

(Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu)

YOUR will be done! but God send it may be the same with mine.

XII

HUMOURISTS AND ODDITIES

The Ladies' Battle, in four letters

(Lady Seymour, the Queen of Beauty at the Eglinton Tournament and R. B. Sheridan's granddaughter, and Lady Shuckburgh exchange notes as to Mary Steadman)

I

LADY SEYMOUR presents her compliments to Lady Shuckburgh, and would be obliged to her for the character of Mary Steadman, who states that she has lived twelve months, and still is, in Lady Shuckburgh's establishment. Can Mary Steadman cook plain dishes well, and make bread, and is she honest, sober, willing, cleanly, and good tempered? Lady Seymour will also like to know the reason she leaves Lady Shuckburgh's house. Direct under care to Lord Seymour, Meriden Bradley, Wiltshire.

II

Lady Shuckburgh presents her compliments to Lady Seymour; her ladyship's letter, dated October 28th, only

reached her yesterday, November 3rd. Lady Shuckburgh was unacquainted with the name of the kitchen-maid until mentioned by Lady Seymour, as it is her custom neither to apply for, nor give, characters to any of the under servants, this being always done by the housekeeper, Mrs. Couch, and this was well known to the young woman. Therefore Lady Shuckburgh is surprised at her referring any lady to her for a character. Lady Shuckburgh, keeping a professed cook, as well as a housekeeper, in her establishment, it is not very probable she herself should know anything of the abilities or merits of the under servants; she is therefore unable to reply to Lady Seymour's note. Lady Shuckburgh cannot imagine Mary Steadman to be capable of cooking anything, except for the servants' hall table. November 4th.

III

Lady Seymour presents her compliments to Lady Shuckburgh, and begs she will order her housekeeper, Mrs. Couch, to send the girl's character, otherwise another young woman will be sought for elsewhere, as Lady Seymour's children cannot remain without their dinners because Lady Shuckburgh, keeping a professed cook and housekeeper, thinks a knowledge of the details of her establishment beneath her notice. Lady Seymour understands from Steadman that, in addition to her other talents, she was actually capable of cooking food for the little Shuckburghs to partake of when hungry.

IV

MADAM,—Lady Shuckburgh has directed me to acquaint you that she declines answering your note, the

vulgarity of which she thinks beneath her contempt, and although it may be characteristic of the Sheridans to be vulgar, coarse, and witty, it is not that of a lady, unless she chances to have been *born in a garret and bred in a kitchen.* Mary Steadman informs me that your ladyship does not keep either a cook or housekeeper, and that you only require a girl who can cook a mutton chop; if so, I apprehend that Mary Steadman, or any *other scullion*, will be found fully equal to the establishment of the Queen of Beauty.—I am, Madam, your Ladyship's etc. etc.,

ELIZABETH COUCH

Charles Lamb softens the loss of a brother

(To Coleridge)

October 9, 1800

I SUPPOSE you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle.

I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event.

He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black.

Everything wore an aspect suitable to the respect due to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spoke till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell.

This was *Lethe* to Cottle, and his poor face, wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak.

I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent

copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph until now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations.

At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and good.

I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha.

At that moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians, the author was as 9, the brother as 1.

I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root I went to work, and beslabbered *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults, slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish.

Perhaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things*.

What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter

incapacity of comprehending that there can be anything bad in poetry.

All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses*.

So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I had really forgotten a good deal of *Alfred*, I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience.

For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Phillips' Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived.

To the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head.

I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments.

I rather guess that the brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together.

Poor Cottle, I must leave him after his short dream to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta News. C. L.

At Weston Underwood

William Cowper receives a visitor, and becomes a prophet in his own country

(To Lady Hesketh)

THE LODGE, *November* 27, 1787

IT is the part of wisdom, my dearest cousin, to sit down contented under the demands of necessity, because they are such.

I am sensible that you cannot in my uncle's present infirm state, and of which it is not possible to expect any considerable amendment, indulge either us, or yourself, with a journey to Weston. Yourself I say, both because I know it will give you pleasure to see *Causidice mi*[1] once more, especially in the comfortable abode where you have placed him, and because after so long an imprisonment in London, you who love the country and have a taste for it, would of course be glad to return to it. For my own part, to me it is ever new, and though I have now been an inhabitant of this village a twelvemonth, and have during the half of that time been at liberty to expatiate, and to make discoveries, I am daily finding out fresh scenes and walks, which you would never be satisfied with enjoying—some of them are unapproachable by you either on foot or in your carriage. Had you twenty toes (whereas I suppose you have but ten) you could not reach them; and coach wheels have never been seen there since the flood. Before it indeed, (as Burnet says that the earth was then perfectly free from all inequalities in its surface), they might have been seen there every day. We have other walks both upon hill-tops and in valleys beneath, some of which by the help

[1] The appellation which Sir Thomas Hesketh used to give him in jest, when he was of the Temple.—*Southey's note.*

of your carriage, and many of them without its help, would be always at your command.

On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me.

I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows: "Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All-Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr. Cox the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You would do me a great favour, sir, if you would furnish me with one."

To this I replied: "Mr. Cox, you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, Cox the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose."

"Alas! sir, I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading, that the people of our town cannot understand him."

I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, Perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason. But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my Muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him.

The waggon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the

mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals! I have written *one*, that serves *two hundred* persons.

A few days since I received a very obliging letter from Mr. Mackenzie. He tells me that his own papers, which are by far, he is sorry to say it, the most numerous, are marked V.I.Z.

Accordingly, my dear, I am happy to find that I am engaged in a correspondence with Mr. Viz, a gentleman for whom I have always entertained the profoundest veneration. But the serious fact is, that the papers distinguished by those signatures have ever pleased me most, and struck me as the work of a sensible man, who knows the world well, and has more of Addison's delicate humour than anybody.

A poor man begged food at the Hall lately. The cook gave him some vermicelli soup. He ladled it about some time with the spoon, and then returned it to her, saying, "I am a poor man, it is true, and I am very hungry, but yet I cannot eat broth with maggots in it."

Once more, my dear, a thousand thanks for your box full of good things, useful things, and beautiful things.—Yours ever, W. C.

A Parish Clerk thinks better of it, and withdraws his threats

DEAR AND REV. SIR,—I avail myself of the opportunity of troubling your honour with these lines, which I hope you will excuse, which is the very sentiments of your humble servant's heart. Ignorantly, rashly, but reluctantly, I gave you warning to leave your highly respected office and most amiable duty, as being your

servant, and clerk of this your most well wished parish, and place of my succour and support.

But, dear Sir, I well know it was no fault of yours nor from any of my most worthy parishioners. It were because I thought I were not sufficiently paid for the interments of the silent dead. But will I be a Judas and leave the house of my God, the place where His Honour dwelleth for a few pieces of money? No. Will I be a Peter and deny myself of an office in His Sanctuary and cause me to weep bitterly? No. Can I be so unreasonable as to deny, if I like and am well, to ring that solemn bell that speaks the departure of a soul? No. Can I leave digging the tombs of my neighbours and acquaintances which have many a time made me shudder and think of my mortality, when I have dug up the mortal remains of some perhaps as I well knew? No. And can I so abruptly forsake the service of my beloved Church of which I have not failed to attend every Sunday for these seven and a half years? No. Can I leave waiting upon you a minister of that Being that sitteth between the Cherubim and flieth upon the wings of the wind? No. Can I leave the place where our most holy services nobly calls forth and says, "Those whom God have joined together" (and being as I am a married man) "let no man put asunder"? No. And can I leave that ordinance where you say then and there "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and he becomes regenerate and is grafted into the body of Christ's Church? No. And can I think of leaving off cleaning at Easter the House of God in which I take such delight, in looking down her aisles and beholding her sanctuaries and the table of the Lord? No. And can I forsake taking part in the service of Thanksgiving of women after childbirth, when mine own

wife has been delivered ten times? No. And can I leave off waiting on the congregation of the Lord which you well know, Sir, is my delight? No. And can I forsake the Table of the Lord at which I have feasted I suppose some thirty times? No. And, dear Sir, can I ever forsake you who have been so kind to me? No. And I well know you will not entreat me to leave, neither to return from following after you, for where you pray there will I pray, where you worship there will I worship. Your Church shall be my Church, your people shall be my people and your God my God. By the waters of Babylon am I to sit down and weep and leave thee, O my Church! and hang my harp upon the trees that grow therein? No. One thing have I desired of the Lord that I will require even that I may dwell in the House of the Lord and to visit His temple. More to be desired of me, O my Church, than gold, yea than fine gold, sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb.

Now, kind Sir, the very desire of my heart is still to wait upon you. Please tell the Churchwardens all is reconciled, and if not, I will get me away into the wilderness, and hide me in the desert, in the cleft of the rock. But I hope still to be your Gehazi, and when I meet my Shunamite to say, "All, all is well." And I will conclude my blunders with my oft-repeated prayer, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

P.S.—Now, Sir, I shall go on with my fees the same as I found them, and will make no more trouble about them, but I will not, I cannot leave you, nor your delightful duties.—Your most obedient servant,

GEORGE G——G

A Minister's Uprising

Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, describes a day's work

CHESTERTON, *May* 26, 1784

OLD FRIEND,—You love I should write folios: that depends upon circumstances, and if the thunderstorm lasts, it will be so: but what a sad thing it is to be forced to write, when one has nothing to say? Well, you shall have an apology for not writing,—that is, a diary of one day.

Rose at three o'clock—crawled into the library—and met one who said, "Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light—the night cometh, when no man can work—my father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Rang the great bell, and roused the girls to milking—went up to the farm, roused the horse-keeper—fed the horses while he was getting up—called the boy to suckle the calves, and clean out the cow-house—lighted the pipe, walked round the gardens to see what was wanting there—went up the paddock to see if the weanling calves were well—went down to the ferry, to see whether the boy had scooped and cleaned the boats — returned to the farm—examined the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn of eight horses going to plough—mended the acre staff—cut some thongs, whip-corded the boys' plough whips—pumped the troughs full—saw the hogs fed—examined the swill tubs, and then the cellar—ordered a quarter of malt, for the hogs want grains, and the men want beer—filled the pipe again, returned to the river, and bought a lighter of turf for dairy fires, and another of sedge for ovens—hunted up the wheelbarrows and set them a-trundling—returned to the farm, called the men to breakfast, and cut the boys' bread and cheese,

and saw the wooden bottles filled—sent one plough to the three-roods, another to the three half-acres, and so on—shut the gates, and the clock struck five—breakfasted—set two men to ditch the five roods—two more to chop sads, and spread about the land—two more to throw up muck in the yard—and three men and six women to weed wheat—set on the carpenter to repair cow-cribs, and set them up till winter—the wheeler to mend up the old carts, cart-ladders, rakes, etc., preparatory to hay-time and harvest—walked to the six-acres, found hogs in the grass—went back and sent a man to hedge and thorn—sold the butcher a fat calf, and the suckler a lean one—the clock strikes nine—walked into barley-field—barleys fine, picked off a few tiles and stones, and cut a few thistles—the peas fine, but foul ; the charlock must be topped—the tares doubtful ; the fly seems to have taken them—prayed for rain, but could not see a cloud—came round to the wheat-field—wheats rather thin, but the finest colour in the world—set four women on to the shortest wheats—ordered one man to weed the ridge of the long wheats—and two women to keep rank and file with him in the furrows—thistles many—blue-bottles no end—traversed all the wheat-field—came to the fallow-field—the ditchers have run crooked—set them straight—the flag-sads cut too much, rush-sads too little, strength wasted, shew the men how to three-corner them—laid out more work for the ditchers—went to the ploughs—set the foot a little higher ; cut a wedge, set the coulter deeper, must go and get a new mould-board against to-morrow—went to the other plough—picked up some wool, and tyed over the traces—mended a horse-tree, tyed a thong to the plough-hammer—went to see which lands want ploughing first—sat down under a bush—wondered how any man could

be so silly as to call me *reverend*—read two verses and thought of his loving-kindness in the midst of his temple—gave out, "Come all harmonious tongues," and set Mount Ephraim tune—rose up—whistled—the dogs wagged their tails, and on we went—got home—dinner ready—filled the pipe—drank some milk—and fell asleep—woke by the carpenter for some slats, which the sawyer must cut—the Reverend Messrs. A. in a coat, B. in a gown of black, and C. in one of purple, came to drink tea, and to settle whether Gomer was the father of the Celts and Gauls and Britons, or only the uncle—proof sheet from Mr. Archdeacon—corrected it—washed—dressed—went to meeting, and preached from, *The end of all things is at hand, be ye sober and watch unto prayer*.—found a dear brother *reverence* there, who went home with me, and edified us all out of Solomon's Song, with a dish of tripe out of Leviticus, and a golden candlestick out of Exodus.—Really and truly we look for you and Mrs. Keene and Mr. Dore at harvest; and if you do not come I know what you all are.

Let Mr. Winch go where he can better himself. Is not this a folio? And like many other folios?

R. ROBINSON

Charles Lamb saves George Dyer's life

(To John Rickman)

[? *November* 1801]

A LETTER from G. Dyer will probably accompany this. I wish I could convey to you any notion of the whimsical scenes I have been witness to in this fortnight past. 'Twas on Tuesday week the poor heathen

scrambled up to my door about breakfast time. He came thro' a violent rain with no neckcloth on, and a *beard* that made him a spectacle to men and angels, and tap'd at the door. Mary open'd it, and he stood stark still and held a paper in his hand importing that he had been ill with a fever. He either wouldn't or couldn't speak except by signs. When you went to comfort him he put his hand upon his heart and shook his head and told us his complaint lay where no medicines could reach it. I was dispatch'd for Dr. Dale, Mr. Phillips of St. Paul's Churchyard, and Mr. Frend, who is to be his executor. George solemnly delivered into Mr. Frend's hands and mine an old burnt preface that had been in the fire, with injunctions which we solemnly vow'd to obey that it should be printed after his death with his last corrections, and that some account should be given to the world why he had not fulfill'd his engagement with subscribers. Having done this and borrow'd two guineas of his bookseller (to whom he imparted in confidence that he should leave a great many loose papers behind him which would only want methodising and arranging to prove very lucrative to any bookseller after his death), he laid himself down on my bed in a mood of complacent resignation. By the aid of meat and drink put into him (for I all along suspected a vacuum) he was enabled to sit up in the evening, but he had not got the better of his intolerable fear of dying ; he expressed such philosophic indifference in his speech and such frightened apprehensions in his physiognomy that if he had truly been dying, and I had known it, I could not have kept my countenance. In particular, when the doctor came and ordered him to take little white powders (I suppose of chalk or alum, to humour him), he ey'd him with a *suspicion* which I could not account for ; he has since explain'd that he

took it for granted Dr. Dale knew his situation and had ordered him these powders to hasten his departure that he might suffer as little pain as possible. Think what an aspect the heathen put on with these fears upon a dirty face. To recount all his freaks for two or three days while he thought he was going, and how the fit operated, and sometimes the man got uppermost and sometimes the author, and he had this excellent person to serve, and he must correct some proof sheets for Phillips, and he could not bear to leave his subscribers unsatisfy'd, but he must not think of these things now, he was going to a place where he should satisfy all his debts—and when he got a little better he began to discourse what a happy thing it would be if there was a place where all the good men and women in the world might meet, meaning heav'n, and I really believe for a time he had doubts about his soul, for he was very near, if not quite, light-headed. The fact was he had not had a good meal for some days and his little dirty Niece (whom he sent for with a still dirtier Nephew, and hugg'd him, and bid them farewell) told us that unless he dines out he subsists on tea and gruels. And he corroborated this tale by ever and anon complaining of sensations of gnawing which he felt about his *heart*, which he mistook his stomach to be, and sure enough these gnawings were dissipated after a meal or two, and he surely thinks that he has been rescued from the jaws of death by Dr. Dale's white powders. He is got quite well again by nursing, and chirps of odes and lyric poetry the day long—he is to go out of town on Monday, and with him goes the dirty train of his papers and books which follow'd him to our house. I shall not be sorry when he takes his nipt carcase out of my bed, which it has occupied, and vanishes with all his Lyric lumber, but I will endeavour

to bring him in future into a method of dining at least once a day. I have proposed to him to dine with me (and he has nearly come into it) whenever he does not go out; and pay me. I will take his money beforehand and he shall eat it out. If I don't it will go all over the world. Some worthless relations, of which the dirty little devil that looks after him and a still more dirty nephew are component particles, I have reason to think divide all his gains with some lazy worthless authors that are his constant satellites. The Literary Fund has voted him seasonably £20, and if I can help it he shall spend it on his own carcase. I have assisted him in arranging the remainder of what he calls Poems and he will get rid of 'em I hope in another [*Here three lines are torn away at the foot of the page, wherein Lamb makes the transition from George Dyer to another poor author, George Burnett*].

I promised Burnett to write when his parcel went. He wants me to certify that he is more awake than you think him. I believe he may be by this time, but he is so full of self-opinion that I fear whether he and Phillips will ever do together. What he is to do for Phillips he whimsically seems to consider more as a favour done *to* P. than a job *from* P. He still persists to call employment *dependence*, and prates about the insolence of booksellers and the tax upon geniuses. Poor devil! he is not launched upon the ocean and is sea-sick with aforethought. I write plainly about him, and he would stare and frown finely if he read this treacherous epistle, but I really am anxious about him, and that [? it] nettles me to see him so proud and so helpless. If he is not serv'd he will never serve himself. I read his long letter to Southey, which I suppose you have seen. He had better have been furnishing copy for Phillips than luxuriating

in tracing the causes of his imbecility. I believe he is a little wrong in not ascribing more to the structure of his own mind. He had his yawns from nature, his pride from education.

I hope to see Southey soon, so I need only send my remembrance to him now. Doubtless I need not tell him that Burnett is not to be foster'd in self-opinion. His eyes want opening, to see himself a man of middling stature. I am not oculist enough to do this. The booksellers may one day remove the film. I am all this time on the most cordial supping terms of amity with G. Burnett and really love him at times: but I must speak freely of people behind their backs and not think it backbiting. It is better than Godwin's way of telling a man he is a fool to his face.

I think if you could do anything for George in the way of an office (God knows whether you can in any haste, but you did talk of it) it is my firm belief that it would be his *only chance* of settlement; he will never live by his *literary exertions*, as he calls them—he is too proud to go the usual way to work, and he has no talents to make that way unnecessary. I know he talks big in his letter to Southey that his mind is undergoing an alteration and that the die is now casting that shall consign him to honour or dishonour, but these expressions are the convulsions of a fever, not the sober workings of health. Translated into plain English, he now and then perceives he must work or starve, and then he thinks he'll work; but when he goes about it there's a lion in the way. He came dawdling to me for an Encyclopædia yesterday. I recommended him to Norris' library; and he said if he could not get it there Phillips was bound to furnish him with one; it was Phillips' interest to do so, and all that. This was

true with some restrictions—but as to Phillips' interests to oblige G. B.! Lord help his simple head! P. could by a *whistle* call together a host of such authors as G. B. like Robin Hood's merry men in green. P. has regular regiments in pay. Poor writers are his crab-lice and suck at him for nutriment. His round pudding chops are their *idea* of plenty when *in their idle fancies they aspire to be rich.*

What do you think of a life of G. Dyer? I can scarcely conceive a more amusing novel. He has been connected with all sects in the world and he will faithfully tell all he knows. Everybody will read it; and if it is not done according to my fancy I promise to put him in a novel when he dies. Nothing shall escape *me.* If you think it feasible, whenever you write you may encourage him. Since he has been so close with me I have perceiv'd the workings of his inordinate vanity, his gigantic attention to particles and to prevent open vowels in his odes, his solicitude that the public may not lose any tittle of his poems by his death, and all the while his utter ignorance that the world don't care a pin about his odes and his criticisms, a fact which everybody knows but himself—he *is a rum genius.* C. L.

William Cowper is solicited for his vote

(To the Rev. John Newton)

March 29, 1784

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It being His Majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the Parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was not the less welcome for coming,

like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected.

As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard side, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element, as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water-mark, by the usual dashing of the waves.

We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville.

Puss was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach. Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. Grenville advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit.

I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit.

I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt,

because Mr. Ashburner, the draper, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying, that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew.

He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman.

He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a ribband from his buttonhole.

The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, Puss scampered, the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more. I thought myself, however, happy in being able to affirm truly that I had not that influence for which he sued; and which, had I been possessed of it, with my present views of the dispute between the Crown and the Commons, I must have refused him, for he is on the side of the former. It is comfortable to be of no consequence in a world where one cannot exercise any without disobliging somebody. The town, however, seems to be much at his service, and if he be equally successful throughout the county, he will undoubtedly gain his election.

Mr. Ashburner, perhaps, was a little mortified, because it

was evident that I owed the honour of this visit to his misrepresentation of my importance. But had he thought proper to assure Mr. Grenville that I had three heads, I should not, I suppose, have been bound to produce them.

Charles Dickens gives Wilkie Collins news of John Poole

October 8, 1862

I SAW Poole (for my sins) last Saturday, and he *was* a sight. He had got out of bed to receive me (at 3 p.m.) and tried to look as if he had been up at Dawn—with a dirty and obviously warm impression of himself on the bedclothes. It was a tent bedstead with four wholly unaccounted for and bare poles, each with an immense spike on the top, like four Lightning conductors. He had a fortnight's grey beard, and had made a lot of the most extraordinary memoranda of questions to ask me —which he couldn't read—through an eyeglass which he couldn't hold. He was continually beset with a notion that his landlady was listening outside the door, and was continually getting up from a kind of ironing-board at which he sat, with the intention of darting at the door, but invariably missed his aim, and brought himself up by the forehead against blind corners of the wall. He had a dressing-gown over his nightshirt, and wore his trousers where Blondin wears his Baskets. He said, with the greatest indignation, I might suppose what sort of "society" he could get out of his landlady, when he mentioned that she could say nothing, on being consulted by him touching the Poison-Case at the Old Bailey, but, "People didn't ought to poison people, sir; it's wrong."—Ever affec'ly, C. D.

Another Model

Another model letter from Mary Guilhermin's book, 1766

DEAR MAMMA,—I am much obliged to papa and you for thinking on me; the taylor took measure of me yesterday, and promises me my new suit by next Sunday. I shall examine every pocket in hopes of finding a blessing from dear mamma; whose tenderness and spirit, I am persuaded, will not permit her to let her son appear less than others, as my school-fellows are indulged for good behaviour to go next week with our mistress and see a play exhibited by some strollers in the next village; we have had an account of its being very merry and entertaining. Everyone is intent on the promised diversion, and I hope you will not disappoint the proposed pleasure of your affectionate and dutiful son.

XIII

THE PEN REFLECTIVE

Horace Walpole in the vein of Ecclesiastes

(To George Montagu, Esq.)

PARIS, *November* 21, 1765

YOU must not be surprised when my letters arrive long after their date. I write them at my leisure, and send them when I find any Englishman going to London, that I may not be kept in check, if they were to pass through both French and English posts.

Your letter to Madame Roland, and the books for her, will set out very securely in a day or two. My bookseller here happens to be of Rheims, and knows Madame Roland, *comme deux gouttes d'eau*. This perhaps is not a well-placed simile, but the French always use one, and when they are once established, and we know the tense, it does not signify sixpence for the sense.

My gout and my stick have entirely left me. I totter still, it is true, but I trust I shall be able to whisk about at Strawberry as well almost as ever. When that hour strikes; to be sure I shall not be very long. The same-

ness of the life here is worse than anything but English politics and the House of Commons. Indeed, I have Dumenil. The Dauphin, who is not dead yet, detains the whole camp at Fontainebleau, whither I dare not venture, as the situation is very damp, and the lodgings abominable. Sights, too, I have scarce seen any yet; and I must satisfy my curiosity; for I think I shall never come again—no, let us sit down quietly and comfortably, and enjoy our coming old age. Oh! if you are in earnest and transplant yourself to Roehampton, how happy I shall be! You know, if you believe an experience of above thirty years, that you are one of the very, very few, for whom I really care a straw. You know how long I have been vexed at seeing so little of you. What has one to do, when one grows tired of the world, as we both do, but to draw nearer and nearer, and gently waste the remains of life with the friends with whom one began it! Young and happy people will have no regard for us and our old stories, and they are in the right; but we shall not tire one another; we shall laugh together when nobody is by to laugh at us, and we may think ourselves young enough when we see nobody younger. Roehampton is a delightful spot, at once cheerful and retired. You will amble in your chaise about Richmond-park; we shall see one another as often as we like; I shall frequently peep at London, and bring you tales of it, and we shall sometimes touch a card with the Clive, and laugh our fill; for I must tell you, I desire to die when I have nobody left to laugh with me. I have never yet seen or heard anything serious that was not ridiculous. Jesuits, methodists, philosophers, politicians, the hypocrite Rousseau, the scoffer Voltaire, the encyclopedists, the Humes, the Lytteltons, the Grenvilles, the

atheist tyrant of Prussia, and the Mountebank of History, Mr. Pitt, all are to me but impostors in their various ways. Fame or interest is their object; and after all their parade, I think a ploughman who sows, reads his almanack, and believes the stars but so many farthing candles, created to prevent his falling into a ditch as he goes home at night, a wiser and more rational being, and, I am sure, an honester than any of them. Oh! I am sick of visions and systems, that shove one another aside, and come over again, like the figures in a moving picture. Rabelais brightens up to me as I see more of the world; he treated it as it deserved, laughed at it all, and, as I judge from myself, ceased to hate it; for I find hatred an unjust preference. Adieu!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu contemplates facts

(To E. W. Montagu, Esq.)

December 9, 1711

I AM not at all surprised at my Aunt Cheyne's conduct: people are seldom very much grieved (and never ought to be) at misfortunes they expect. When I gave myself to you, I gave up the very desire of pleasing the rest of the world, and am pretty indifferent about it. I think you are very much in the right for designing to visit Lord Pierrepont. As much as you say I love the town, if you think it necessary for your interest to stay some time here, I would not advise you to neglect a certainty for an uncertainty; but I believe if you pass the Christmas here, great matters will be expected from your hospitality: however, you are a better judge of that than I am.

I continue indifferently well, and endeavour as much as I can to preserve myself from spleen and melancholy; not for my own sake; I think that of little importance; but in the condition I am, I believe it may be of very ill consequence; yet, passing whole days alone as I do, I do not always find it possible, and my constitution will sometimes get the better of my reason. Human nature itself, without any additional misfortunes, furnishes disagreeable meditations enough. Life itself, to make it supportable, should not be considered too nearly; my reason represents to me in vain the inutility of serious reflections.

The idle mind will sometimes fall into contemplations that serve for nothing but to ruin the health, destroy good humour, hasten old age and wrinkles, and bring on an habitual melancholy.

'Tis a maxim with me to be young as long as one can: there is nothing can pay one for that invaluable ignorance which is the companion of youth; those sanguine groundless hopes, and that lively vanity, which make all the happiness of life. To my extreme mortification I grow wiser every day. I don't believe Solomon was more convinced of the vanity of temporal affairs than I am: I lose all taste of this world, and I suffer myself to be bewitched by the charms of the spleen, though I know and foresee all the irremediable mischiefs arising from it.

I am insensibly fallen into the writing you a melancholy letter, after all my resolutions to the contrary; but I do not enjoin you to read it. Make no scruple of flinging it into the fire at the first dull line.

Forgive the ill effects of my solitude, and think me, as I am, ever yours, M. W. MONTAGU

An Illusion of Youth

William Cowper moralises on Time

(To Mrs. Cowper)

August 31, 1780

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I am obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so; and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect.

Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence: An account of your recovering from a fever, and of Lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected, for by what remembrance I have of her ladyship, who was never much acquainted with her, she had reached those years that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please (you cannot think of it too much), but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old when I saw them last, are old still; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws, (as our grannams called

them,) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others.

But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so.

Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands; if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them who, like you, can stand a-tiptoe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can favour me with a little account of your own family, without inconvenience, I shall be glad to receive it; for though separated from my kindred by little more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.—Yours, my dear cousin,

W. C.

James Beattie compares himself with others

(To the Hon. Charles Boyd)

ABERDEEN, *November* 16, 1766

LUCKILY I am now a little better, so as to be able to read a page, and write a sentence or two without stopping; which, I assure you, is a very great matter. My hopes and my spirits begin to revive once more.

I flatter myself I shall soon get rid of this infirmity; nay, that I shall ere long be in the way of becoming a *great man.*

For have I not headaches, like Pope? vertigo, like Swift? grey hairs, like Homer? Do I not wear large shoes (for fear of corns) like Virgil? and sometimes complain of sore eyes (though not of *lippitude*), like Horace? Am I not at this present writing invested with a garment not less ragged than that of Socrates? Like Joseph the patriarch, I am a mighty dreamer of dreams; like Nimrod the hunter, I am an eminent builder of castles (in the air).

I procrastinate, like Julius Cæsar, and very lately, in imitation of Don Quixote, I rode a horse, lean, old, and lazy, like Rosinante.

Sometimes, like Cicero, I write bad verses; and sometimes bad prose, like Virgil. This last instance I have on the authority of Seneca.

I am of small stature, like Alexander the Great; I am somewhat inclinable to fatness, like Dr. Arbuthnot and Aristotle; and I drink brandy and water, like Mr. Boyd.

I might compare myself, in relation to many other infirmities, to many other *great men*; but if Fortune is not influenced in my favour by the particulars already enumerated, I shall despair of ever recommending myself to her good graces. I once had some thought of soliciting her patronage on the score of my resembling great men in their good qualities; but I had so little to say on that subject, that I could not for my life furnish matter for one well-rounded period: and you know a short, ill-turned speech is very improper to be used in an address to a female deity.

Do not you think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question whether

one person was ever eminent for both. Lucretius lays aside the poet when he assumes the philosopher, and the philosopher when he assumes the poet. In the one character he is truly excellent, in the other he is absolutely nonsensical.

Hobbes was a tolerable metaphysician, but his poetry is the worst that ever was. Pope's *Essay on Man* is the finest philosophical poem in the world; but it seems to me to do more honour to the imagination than to the understanding of its author: I mean, its sentiments are noble and affecting, its images and allusions apposite, beautiful, and new; its wit transcendently excellent; but the scientific part of it is very exceptionable.

Whatever Pope borrows from Leibnitz, like most other metaphysical theories, is frivolous and unsatisfying. What Pope gives us of his own, is energetic, irresistible, and divine. The incompatibility of philosophical and poetical genius is, I think, no unaccountable thing.

Poetry exhibits the general qualities of a species; philosophy the particular qualities of individuals.

This forms its conclusions from a painful and minute examination of single instances: *that* decides instantaneously, either from its own instinctive sagacity, or from a singular and unaccountable penetration, which at one glance sees all the instances which the philosopher must leisurely and progressively scrutinize, one by one. This persuades you gradually, and by detail; the other overpowers you in an instant by a single effort. Observe the effect of argumentation in poetry; we have too many instances of it in Milton: it transforms the noblest thoughts into drawling inferences, and the most beautiful language into prose; it checks the tide of passion, by giving the mind a different employment in the comparison of ideas.

A little philosophical acquaintance with the most beautiful parts of nature, both in the material and immaterial system, is of use to a poet, and gives grace and solidity to poetry; as may be seen in *The Georgics*, *The Seasons*, and *The Pleasures of Imagination*; but this acquaintance, if it is anything more than superficial, will do a poet rather harm than good; and will give his mind that turn for minute observation which enfeebles the fancy by restraining it, and counteracts the native energy of judgment by rendering it fearful and suspicious.

The Rev. Sydney Smith contemplates another and a better life

COMBE FLOREY, *September* 13, 1842

MY DEAR LADY HOLLAND,—I am sorry to hear Allen is not well; but the reduction of his legs is a pure and unmixed good; they are enormous,—they are clerical! He has the creed of a philosopher and the legs of a clergyman; I never saw such legs,—at least, belonging to a layman.

Read *A Life in the Forest*, skipping nimbly; but there is much of good in it.

It is a bore, I admit, to be past seventy, for you are left for execution, and are daily expecting the death-warrant; but, as you say, it is not anything very capital we quit. We are, at the close of life, only hurried away from stomach-aches, pains in the joints, from sleepless nights and unamusing days, from weakness, ugliness, and nervous tremors; but we shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects. —— will be less irritable; —— more silent; —— will assent; Jeffrey will speak slower; Bobus will be just as he is; I shall be more

respectful to the upper clergy; but I shall have as lively a sense as I now have of all your kindness and affection for me.

SYDNEY SMITH

Seneca enlarges to Lucilius on old age

WHITHERSOEVER I turn myself, spectacles, reminding me of my old age, present themselves. I went the other day to my country house just without the city, and was complaining how much it seemed out of repair, notwithstanding the money which I had laid out upon it. "It may be so," said my bailiff, "but it is from no want of care in me. I have done all in my power to keep it up, but the truth is, it is very old." Now you must know this villa was of my own raising, and has grown to its present state under my hands. What then have I to expect, if stones laid down in my own time have begun to show symptoms of decay. Being put by this a little out of humour with the man, I laid hold of the first occasion of finding fault. "It seems to me," said I, "that these plane trees have been neglected—how rotten and withered are these branches! In what a wretched and foul condition are these stems! This would not have happened if anyone had dug round it, and given it water." Upon this my bailiff swears heartily that he had done all he could, and spared no pains, but that they were old. Now, between ourselves, I planted these trees, and witnessed their first foliage. Turning to the gate, I said, "And pray who is that decrepit old fellow whom you have, properly enough, placed here, with his face turned towards the door? Where in the world did you pick up this man? What whim is this, to bring this strange corpse into my house?" "What! don't you know me?" says the old man; "I am Felicio, to whom you used formerly

to bring playthings. I am the son of Philositus, your former bailiff: your little favourite playfellow." "Surely," said I, "the man is out of his mind. He my little playfellow! The thing is impossible. But yet it may be, for I see he is shedding his teeth."

Thus am I indebted to my villa for reminding me, at every turn, of my old age. Let us embrace it, let us love it. To him who knows how to use it, it is full of enjoyment.

Fruit is most grateful towards the end of the season. Youth, when one is just losing it, is the most attractive. The last potation is the most agreeable to the lovers of wine; and every pleasure is most valued when it is coming to its end. Decay, when it is gradual, and not precipitate, is really pleasant. I don't fear to pronounce a man standing on the very ultimate verge of life to have his solace; or at least we may say that the absence of all want is itself a sort of pleasure. How sweet it is to have lived out, and taken leave of, all anxious desires!

But you will say that it is painful to have death before our eyes. My answer is, in the first place, that it ought always to be before the eyes as well of the young as of the old, for we are not summoned as we stand in the register; and then that no one is so old as to make it sinful to expect another day. Every day is another step in life. All our time consists of parts: of circles within circles of different orbits, some one of which comprehends the rest; and thus compasses the whole life of man from the beginning to the end of life. One includes the years of youth; another circumscribes only the period of childhood. A single year includes all those portions of time, of which the whole of existence is but the multiplication. A month lies within a narrower circle, and a day within one still of smaller extent. And yet the day has its

beginning and its end, from the rising to the setting sun. Heraclitus, who from his obscurity got the name of Scotinus, says "dies par omni est": which some interpret, as if he had said, They are equal as to hours, which is true enough; for if a day is a period of six hours, in that respect all days are equal: since the night takes up what the day loses.

Another holds the meaning to be, that one day is but the counterpart of the other. After all, the longest space of time exhibits only what may be found in one day—light and darkness, with their vicissitudes and alternations. Every day should be therefore so ordered and disposed, as if it closed the series, and were the measure and completion of our existence. Pacuvius, who made Syria his own country by long residence in it, when he had regaled himself with wine and feasting, as at a funeral banquet, caused himself to be carried from supper to his bed-chamber, that, amidst the applause of his companions, the following words might be chanted to music, βεβίωται βεβίωται, "He hath lived, he hath lived"; and such was his practice every day. Now this that was done by him with a bad conscience, let us do with a good one; and when retiring to our rest, let us with composed and cheerful spirits have to say, "Vixi, et quem cursum dederat fortuna peregi." If God should vouchsafe us a to-morrow, let us receive it with joy and thankfulness.

He is the happiest man,—the secure possessor of himself, who waits for the morrow without solicitude;—he who can go to bed at night saying, "I have lived," in the full sense of the phrase, rises every morning with a day gained.

Exiled to Enfield

Charles Lamb laments his exile

(To William Wordsworth)

p.m. January 22, 1830

AND is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton Stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom, Autumn hath foregone its moralities, they are hey-pass re-pass [as] in a show-box. Yet as far as last year occurs back, for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass.

Suffice it that after sad spirits prolonged thro' many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins, have taken a farewell of the pompous troublesome trifle called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them, with the garden but to see it grow, with the tax gatherer but to hear him knock, with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how, quietists, confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite kill'd, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in

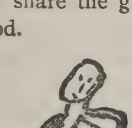
Fleetmarket, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health?—intolerable dulness. What by early hours and moderate meals?—a total blank. O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets—or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers, but to have a little teazing image of a town about one, country folks that do not look like country folks, shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked gingerbread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street—and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the shew-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travel'd (marry, they just begin to be conscious of the Red Gauntlet), to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a Cathedral. The very blackguards here are degenerate. The topping gentry, stock brokers. The passengers too many to ensure your quiet, or let you go about whistling, or gaping—too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping thickest winter is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country, but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into Saint Giles's. O let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse, sweet and recreative study, can make the country any thing better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison till man

with promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinn'd himself out of it. Thence follow'd Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions.

From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight, not for any thing there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to, any thing high may, nay must, be read out—you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor—but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye, mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here, it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias enclosed in a whiting's liver to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knock'd your head against something. Do not do so. For your head (I do not flatter) is not a nob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine-pin — unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a "Recluse" out of it, then would I bid the smirch'd god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. What a nice long letter Dorothy has written! Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter-writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear that, tho' I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past: she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we

have adopted this boarding plan. Our providers are an honest pair, dame Westwood and her husband—he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow Bells, retired since with something under a competence, writes himself parcel gentleman, hath borne parish offices, sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten, sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about 15, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, "I have married my daughter, however,"—takes the weather as it comes, outsides it to town in severest season, and a' winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, how comfortable to author-rid folks! and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a *rider* in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to baulk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a *mad horse* to the dismay and expostulary wonderment of innkeepers, ostlers, etc., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Darby. Understand the creature gall'd to death and desperation by gad flies, cormorants winged, worse than beset Inachus' daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a' winter's eves, 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that stagger'd all Dunstable might have been the effect of unromantic necessity, that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly, that needs must when such a devil drove, that

certain spiral configurations in the frame of Thomas Westwood unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. Put case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let Accident and He share the glory! You would all like Thomas Westwood.



How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which like the Sceptre of Agamemnon shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea, nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favour'd in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses, still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple, 60 years ours and our father's friend, he was not more natural to us than this old W. the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner. Well, if we ever do move, we have encumbrances the less to impede us: all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing like the tarnish'd frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry

Crabb is at Rome, advices to that effect have reach'd Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeath'd at parting (whether he should live or die) a Turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Xmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old Bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Hartz forest, his soul is *Begoethe'd*. Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half-year; the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, God forgive me, I have utterly forgotten, we single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? One darling I know they have lost within a twelvemonth, but scarce known to me by sight, and that was a second child lost. We see scarce anybody. We have just now Emma with us for her holydays: you remember her playing at brag with Mr. Quillinan at poor Monkhouse's! She is grown an agreeable young woman; she sees what I write, so you may understand me with limitations. She was our inmate for a twelvemonth, grew natural to us, and then they told us it was best for her to go out as a Governess, and so she went out, and we were only two of us, and our pleasant house-mate is changed to an occasional visitor. If they want my sister to go out (as they call it) there will be only one of us. Heaven keep us all from this acceding to Unity!

Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularizing. C. L.

XIV

THE MEN OF ACTION

Abraham Cann, the Devonshire wrestler, challenges Polkinghorne, the Cornishman

POLKINGHORNE, I will take off my stockings and play bare-legged with you, and you may have two of the hardest and heaviest shoes you like that can be made of leather in the county of Cornwall, and you shall be allowed to stuff yourself as high as the arm pits, to any extent not exceeding the size of a Cornish peck of wool; and I will further engage not to kick you, if you do not kick me.

C. A., an old and not unsophisticated bowler, gives his captain a word of counsel on the eve of the All England match

DEAR JOHN,—So I am to bowl for your people against them Englanders. You wants to win, don't you now? Then don't be so stupid as to roll your ground.—Yours, C. A.

"The ball is 'over'"

Bob Thoms the umpire sends in his resignation

(To Sir William Russell of the Incognito C.C.)

March 15, 1901, N.W.

SIR,—The hardest letter, that ever I handled the pen, to write, I now commence, and that is, through failing health—coupled with "Anno Domini"—I have to close my Cricket career—after 39 years of devoted services to the Incognito club.

I had hoped to have been with you one more season—in the new Century—but not having wintered well hæs upset that hope.

I cannot find words sufficiently expressive to thank the old Club—and its members—for the many kindnesses received, and for the confidence that has been reposed in me.

It is a source of intense gratification to me to think—and know that I have been associated with the "Incognito Club" ever since it was *first* started in 1861—when the late Mr. Pincott Hemming was its Secretary—and to call to mind, that since that time, the club, by the ceaseless energy and watchfulness of his Brother—Sir Augustus W. L. Hemming—was brought forward and placed, in the prominent position, of being one of the most popular of the wandering clubs in England. I cannot enter further into the past, for the subject is too depressing for me to dwell on, so therefore, I must at once return—again—my sincere and heartfelt thanks, and my last words shall be, the fervent hope, that "Health, Happiness and Prosperity" may attend all "Incogs"—and thus I conclude—with my *well known exclamation*, The ball is "over," gentlemen,—and respectfully subscribe—Your faithful servant, ROBERT THOMS

"Half Hours with the Worst Authors"

Edward FitzGerald recommends two letters

(To Charles Keene)

Friday [1880]

MY DEAR KEENE,— . . . Beckford's *Hunting* is an old friend of mine: excellently written; such a relief (like Wesley and the religious men) to the Essayist style of the time.

Do not fail to read the capital Squire's Letter in recommendation of a Stable-man, dated from Great Addington, Northants, 1734: of which some little is omitted after Edition I.; which edition has also a Letter from Beckford's Huntsman about a wicked "Daufter," wholly omitted. This first Edition is a pretty small 4to 1781, with a Frontispiece by Cipriani! . . .

If you come down this Spring, but not before May, I will show you some of these things in a Book I have, which I might call "Half Hours with the Worst Authors," and very fine things by them.

It would be the very best Book of the sort ever published, if published; but no one would think so but myself, and perhaps you, and half a dozen more. If my Eyes hold out I will copy a delightful bit by way of return for your Ballad.

I

An old Squire (a friend of Peter Beckford) supplies a gentleman with an impartial character of John Gray

SIR,—Yours I receiv'd the 24th of this present instant, June, and, at your request, will give you an impartial account of my man, John Gray's character. He

is a shoemaker, or cordwainer, which you please to call it, by trade, and now in our town; he is following the carding business for every one that wants him; he served his time at a town called Binstock, in Northamptonshire; and from thence the Great Addington journeyman, to this occupation, as before mentioned, and used to come to my house, and found, by riding my horses to water, that he rode a horse pretty well; which was not at all mistaken, for he rides a horse well: and he looks after a kennel of hounds very well, and finds a hare very well: he hath no judgment in hunting a pack of hounds now, though he rides well, he don't with discretion, for he don't know how to make the most of a horse; but a very harey-starey fellow: will ride over a church if in his way, though he may prevent a leap by having a gap within ten yards of him; and if you are not in the field with himself, when you are hunting to tutor him about riding, he will kill all the horses you have in the stable in one month, for he hath killed downright, and lamed so that they will never be fit for use, no more than five horses since he has hunted my hounds, which is two years and upwards; he can talk no dog language to a hound; he hath no voice; speaks to a hound such as if his head were in a churn; nor neither does he know how to draw a hound when they are at a loss, no more than a child of two years old. As to his honesty, I always found him honest till about a week ago. I sent my servant that I have now to fetch some sheep's feet from Mr. Stanjan, of Higham Ferrers, where Gray used to go for feet, and I always send my money by the man that brings the feet; and Stanjan told my man that I have now that I owed him money for feet; and when the man came home he told me, and I went to Stanjan, and then I found the truth of the matter. Gray had kept the money in his hands,

and had never paid Stanjan: he had along with me once for a letter, in order for his character, to give him one, but I told him I could not give him a good one, so I would not write at all. Gray is a very great drunkard, can't keep a penny in his pocket: a sad notorious lyar. If you send him upon a mile or two from Uppingham, he will get drunk, stay all day, and never come home until the middle of the night, or such time as he knows his master is in bed. He can nor will not keep any secret; neither has he so much wit as other people, for the fellow is half a fool, for if you would have business done with expedition, if he once gets out of the town, or sight of you, shall see him no more, while the next morning he serves me so and so: you must expect the same if you hire him. I use you just as I would be used myself; if I desired a character of you of a servant, that I had design'd to hire of yours, as to let you know the truth of every thing about him.

I am, sir, your most humble servant to command.

P.S.—He takes good care of his horses, with good looking after as to the dressing of them; but if you don't take care, he will fill the manger full of corn, so that he will clog the horses, and ruin the whole stable of horses.

GREAT ADDINGTON, *June* 28, 1734

II

A huntsman informs his master of the misfortune of his daughter and the state of the hounds

HONORED SIR,—I beg your honouers pardon a thousand times my wicked daufter is brout to bed this day God be praisd the child Is dead har mother

nor I new nothing of it nor nobody as I can hear off 'tis that vile fellow R—— P—— at —— as he has acted such a Roges part she shall not have him by no means I am all most at my wits end I don't now what to do. I bag your honouer will Consider me and Let har stay in har place I don't hear but that all har fellow sarvants likes har very well I have been out with the hounds this day to ayer the frost is very bad the hounds are all pure well at present and horses shepard has had a misfortin with his mare she hung harself with the holter and throd har self and broak har neck and frac tard skul so we wus forsd to nock har In the head from your ever dutyful Humbel Sarvant.

* * * * * * * * *

Wednesday evening

George Forester (of Shropshire) gives Mr. Chambers an account of the death and funeral of Tom Moody, his great whipper-in

DEAR CHAMBERS,—On Tuesday last was buried poor Tom Moody, as good for rough and smooth as ever entered Wildman's Wood. He died brave and honest, as he lived—beloved by all, hated by none that ever knew him. I took his own orders as to his will, funeral, and every other thing that could be thought of.

He died sensible and fully collected as ever man died—in short, died game to the last; for when he could hardly swallow, the poor old lad took the farewell glass for success to fox-hunting and his poor old master (as he termed it), for ever. I am his sole executor, and the bulk of his fortune he left to me—six and twenty shillings, real and bonâ fide sterling cash, free from all incum-

brances, after every debt discharged to a farthing. Noble deeds for Tom, you'd say. The poor old ladies at the Ring of Bells are to have a knot each in remembrance of the poor old lad.

Salop paper will show the whole ceremony of his burial, but for fear you should not see that paper—I send it to you as under.

"Sportsmen, attend.—On Tuesday, 29th inst., was buried at Barrow, near Wenlock, Salop, Thomas Moody, a well-known whipper-in to G. Forester, Esq.'s fox-hounds for twenty years. He was carried to the grave by a proper number of earth-stoppers, and attended by many other sporting friends, who heartily mourned for him."

Directly after the corpse, followed his old favourite horse (which he always called his "Old Soul"), thus accoutred: carrying his last fox's brush in front of his bridle, with his cap, whip, boots, spurs, and girdle across the saddle. The ceremony being over, he (by his own desire), had three clear, rattling view-halloos o'er his grave; and thus ended the career of poor Tom, who lived and died an honest fellow, but alas! a very wet one.

I hope you and your family are well, and you'll believe me as much yours, G. FORESTER

Sergeant Dunt craves permission to fish a little in Col. Cartwright's stream

WEEDON BARRACKS, *May* 12, 1856

HONOURABLE SIR,—A discharged sergeant of the Rifle Brigade, and one who had the honour of serving in the same company, and in more than one campaign under the command of the gallant and much

lamented Captain Cartwright (killed in the Crimea), now makes bold to solicit of his honoured and bereaved parent a written permission to angle of an evening in that wealthy brook, which pursuing its way by Divine Will through your honour's extensive domains, encourages and compensates the fertilizing efforts of your Honour's tenants, adds a cheerful vivacity to the face of nature, seasonably serene, and furnishes of its finny population many impressive convictions of the kind, unceasing regard of our Great Creator in the various sustenance, delicate and invigorating, for the more worthy portion of His laborious creatures.

Trusting, Sir, that indulgent time is reconciling you to the fate of my kind, deceased officer, your much-beloved and lamented son, and that your Honour will condescend to befriend the man whom that son so often befriended, I remain, Honourable Sir, with all due respect, your Honour's most humble and devoted servant and faithful soldier,

JOHN DUNT

WAR DEPARTMENT, WEEDON BARRACKS

Captain Nelson tells Collingwood of his hopes and fears with regard to the French

"CAPTAIN"—LEGHORN ROADS, *August* 1, 1796

MY DEAR COLL.,—The Viceroy tells me that you are at Fiorenzo; therefore I take my chance of this finding you. My date makes me think I am almost at Leghorn; soon I hope to be there in reality. Except 1700 poor devils, all are gone to join the army. Sometimes I hope, at others despair of getting these starved Leghornese to cut the throats of the French crew.

An Idea for a Christian

What an idea for a Christian! I hope there is a great latitude for us in the next world.

This blockade is complete, and we lie very snug in the North Road, as smooth as in a harbour.

I have this moment received information that the post from Naples, which arrived to-day, has brought accounts that the truce with Naples finishes, and hostilities commence to-morrow. Pray God it may be so! With a most sincere wish for driving the French to the devil, your good health, an honourable peace, us safe at home again, I conclude by assuring you, my dear Collingwood, of my unalterable friendship and regard, and that I am, in the fullest sense of the words, yours most truly,

HORATIO NELSON

XV

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sir William Napier tells Lady Hester Stanhope the story of his life

FRESHFORD, *March* 1839

DEAR, DEAR LADY HESTER,—I wish from the bottom of my worn out heart that I could once more see and talk to you, the friend of my youth, when I was full of hope and cared little for the frowns and pains of the world. I too could tell of many things that would be strange, strange as belonging to that England which you and I once thought we knew, a proud and generous nation. It is not so now. Gold is an Englishman's god —gold and ostentation of gold; for this they live and die. Generous sentiments are scarce, magnanimous actions scarcer. Napoleon was cast to perish on a rock under brutal insult; you, the niece of Mr. Pitt, are subject to the persecutions of Lord Palmerston. Yet we are on the eve of great and terrible changes—I fear not for the better, because gold is still the moving power. But there are powerful passions excited. The working men of England, driven by long oppression to violence, are arming

universally; and as they have bad leaders blood will flow without utility.

You demand a history of me and mine. It is painful to relate; to me painful. My old mother died long ago, she was eighty-four. Two of my sisters live, one unmarried; the other has been for years married to Sir Henry Bunbury. His first wife was my wife's sister, his second my own sister; he has four sons by his first marriage, none by his second.

My eldest brother Charles has been twice married; he has two very young children, girls. It was he you heard from in the Ionian Isles, where he has by his talent, activity, and good government, and the great public works he carried on, left a good name that will not be suffered to die away by the Greeks. His numerous wounds, seven and very severe, have not impaired his activity or whitened his head. This month he takes the command of the northern district of England; it is a fearful command at this time, but he is modelled after your men of the *far East*. His book would entertain you much; it is full of painful interest also, for he writes well and acts well; nevertheless, I believe that it is not his book that you have heard of, but my book; of that hereafter.

My second brother George has lost his arm; like a brave man he lost it on the top of the breach at Ciudad Rodrigo in 1812. He married a Scotch lady, and has three sons and two daughters, the youngest about 18; his wife died after the birth of the last child, and he, with a steadiness of sorrow and principle not common, devoted himself to the education of his children. He and Charles are generals and Knights of the Bath, and George is Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. Two of his sons are with him. His policy is to protect the Caffres from the gold-seeking rapacity of the English and Dutch settlers.

He has a hard task, but his soul is honest and his heart true and firm as steel, and he has withal a good head.

Richard did not pursue the law. He married a widow, a very clever and beautiful person; his pursuits and his wife's are alike; they have both great talent, great learning, have high and warm imaginations, delighting in poetry and noble writing, and he is by nature a poet himself; yet their particular pursuit, strange to say, is political economy, and I think it is not unlikely he may some day publish a book on that subject.

Henry, the youngest of us, is a post captain of the navy. He married his cousin. He was rich, happy, and his wife good, affectionate, and one of the most lovely of God's creatures. Alas! she died suddenly about two years ago, leaving him with four children, a broken-hearted, miserable man. He devotes himself to his children; their mother was thirty when she died. He has written a History of Florence, but it is not yet published.

What now shall I tell you? My own tale? I like it not, yet I will tell it to you and truly; but first permit me to join to my brother's history that of our cousin Charles, "Black Charles," they call him. He is not a brother, but I claim a place for him because he is a great man, though a strange one. A life of daring and enterprise in our navy as a captain created him a name which attracted the Portuguese Emperor Don Pedro's attention. Black Charles was offered the command of his fleet; he accepted it, and in one action, against the most overpowering advantages on the enemy's side, decided the fate of Portugal. He is now going out in command of the *Powerful*, 74, to the Levant, and you may perhaps hear of him again; a rough black diamond, but a sure hand in war. Thus you see that we have not let our name sink in the world, and yet we have been honest, and what has been a sore

stumbling block in our way, independent ; always opposed to the powers that be, and yet able to force our way to notice though not to riches. I would willingly dwell longer upon his exploits, but they must have reached you even on Mount Lebanon.

Now again for myself. Why did you ask me? I must rip up old sorrows and probe wounds that have never healed. I am a broken man ; broken, though not bent, —the world has failed to do that ; and I can still make my enemies beware of treading on me. But I will tell you all truly ; I have played my part and continue to do so in the world.

It has been in my power to raise a civil war, and it may be so again, but I abhor such a proceeding. Yet I am courted and feared without reason ; for sorrow and pain, continual sorrow and continual pain, have almost if not quite unsettled my reason ; at least I am conscious that I had another mind once. I do not think I was married when you left England ; my wife was the daughter of Charles Fox. She lives to take care of me when I want care, and she is a person capable of great things ; fortitude and judgment, and energy mental and bodily, she possesses in an extraordinary degree. When I married I was sanguine and confident that I could go far in the world. Secretly I thought God had given me the head and heart of a warrior, and my body was then of iron. Well ! I won my spurs honourably. Three decorations and two steps of rank I gained in the field of battle. Wellington gave them to me ; and I am a Companion of the Bath,—no great thing ; but I could have safely rested my claim upon the testimony of my soldiers. Ah ! those soldiers, the few that are now living are poor and miserable, for England despises her former defenders. My regiment,

the 43rd, was one of the three regiments that formed the Light Division, always in contact with the enemy; those three regiments were avowedly the best that England ever had under arms; this is no idle boast; war was better known, the art more advanced, under Napoleon than in any age of the world before, and the French veterans, those victors of a thousand battles, never could stand an instant before my gallant men. Curse on the liars, the cowardly calumniators, who have told you that Irishmen are cowards! they are equal to the English in bravery, superior to them in hardihood of sufferance and in devotion to their officers in the hour of trouble; and they are superior to the Scotch in everything, and yet there are very good soldiers among the Scotch; I like them not, but I will not belie them.

Was not mine a fair stand for distinction? Peace came, and I am a colonel still! I had no money; and younger officers, some of them bad, were ready to purchase over my head; others were thrust without money over me. I had gained the brevet rank, but I could not gain the regimental rank; the first was to be got on the field, and I got it; the second was to be got by money or favour, and I had neither, so I went on half-pay, and tried to still the gnawing of the worm by occupation of a different kind. I painted in oils, and was elected a member of the Royal Academy. I modelled in clay, and Chantrey, the first of modern sculptors, proposed and got me elected as sculptor in the Savants' Club, called the Athenæum. But the worm gnawed still. I wrote reviews, and I was successful: my first was to defend Sir John Moore. To you I need not speak of that great and heroic man, nor of his wrongs. Southey wrote a history of the Peninsular War; it was smooth and clear in style, but nerveless as the author's

mind, except where his political rancour broke out to destroy Sir John Moore's reputation and to calumniate the French army. For the latter I cared only as it was disgraceful to my country to malign a brave though vanquished enemy; but for the first I felt as you would have felt. I was going to write a commentary, but I soon saw that to beat the false history I must write a true one; the task was formidable, but I have done it; I have beaten the calumniator and established my History in the world's good opinion. I have done more; without yielding one jot of England's glory, I have by just and fair admission of the prowess of France obtained the public assent of the French Generals to the truth of my relation; I have thus solved the difficult problem of recording the defeats of a vain, proud, fiery, and learned people, without losing their approbation; I have obtained the testimony to the glory of the British arms, and thus placed the latter upon a rock. Many enemies in England I have created by this; I should have doubted the value of my work if it had not been so. Truth must be offensive to many. But I have also many supporters, because truth is powerful; and though my History wants one volume still to complete it, the first five volumes have been already translated into French, into Spanish in South America, and reprinted in North America; it is also translated, or being translated, into Italian and German; and I have been elected a member of Military Sciences in Sweden.

My English enemies are virulent and numerous, but I have met them all, and hitherto triumphed, and I will meet them as long as I can speak, write, or pull a trigger. I like not republicanism: I desire to see men of all classes as God designed them to be, free in thought and unabashed in mien, but virtuous and obedient to the just

institutions of society. I do not spurn at kings and nobles, but I like not that they should spurn at me. Would that we had a great man! Changes are at hand; the masses are in movement, but there is none to guide them, and they will clash for mischief.

I am well pleased to do some good, but what can a man do who dare not encounter a shower of rain lest he should lose the use of his limbs for six months? Where is Wellington at this crisis? you will say. Alas! he is great by the head, not by the heart, and that is only half the greatness required. He is of commanding intellect, commanding courage, commanding honesty; but he despises the people, has too many prejudices opposed to their feelings, and they hate and fear him. He cannot work with them because he will not work for them. The rest are nothing. I have, as I have told you, great influence with the people, but it will not last; I can do evil, but not much good; I know well what to oppose, but not what to assist, for there is much evil striving on all sides, and my worn-out body will not allow me to engage in anything requiring exertion of limb. Do not mistake me or imagine that I mistake myself. I do not suppose myself a great man, but I have certain talents and knowledge which have given me a power in the present conjuncture that might be turned to good or bad if I had bodily strength, and I have it not. Well! enough of this matter.

I strive to put off the tale of my sorrows as long as possible. I have had ten children; seven still live, six girls and a boy, but he is deaf and dumb. Three girls died—the first young, very young; it was written; I wept for her, and so it ended. The next died at five years old. She was also deaf and dumb, and that caused her death. I will not tell you how; I cannot; but twelve

years ago she died, and I have not been as I should be since. Should I tell you how more than human her beauty was, and how exquisite her intelligence, notwithstanding her deafness, you would not believe me, but though I am at times insane I am not doting. Six years after her death my eldest child was torn from me by consumption; she was fair and joyous as the day, tall and beautiful, strong of heart, and clear of head; yet a few short months sufficed to send her at the age of eighteen from the admiration of the world, to her grave. I would tell you more about my dear children, only I cannot. I have seven still. . . .

. . . . . .

Lord Chatham, *the* Lord Chatham's Correspondence is being published by his grand-nephews, Captain Pringle of the Guards and his brother. Two volumes are out, but as yet there is not much interest attached to them, so I suppose the valuable papers are reserved for the other volumes; when I say interest, I mean proportionably to the man's fame, for there is curious reading in them. Pringle I have had some dealings with, and I think, judging from his correspondence (for I have not seen him) there is a vein of the good Pitt blood running through him. Your men of the East are, I believe, superior individually to the men of the West, but each man stalks through the world like a lion; they do not herd together, nor work together, and like lions they live and die and are forgotten. The horse is a better animal than the lion. You love the brute creation, and so do I, and I love you that you do love them. The brute is of the same essence as man,—an essence, however, more restricted, confined by the inferior organisation of their bodies, therefore more condensed and honest. What are we of human species? Angels or devils, or a compound of

both? There must be, I think, two governing principles, God and demon, and we partake of both. This doctrine is Eastern, and I think it more reasonable than any other.

I wonder whether you will like my History? It is no whining affair. There is much in it that you would not like, but nothing I think that would lessen your friendship for me; you might be angry, but you would not cease to be my friend, and surely there is nothing that you could say or do, however passionate at the moment, that would hinder me from being your friend, esteeming and reverencing you as much as I do now and ever have done. The time I passed with you at Mr. Pitt's home at Putney, and the few short hasty periods in which [I had] the happiness of being received by you after his death (for me at least they were few, too few, and too short), are among the moments of my past life remembered most vividly and fondly.

This letter runs on. How shall I send it to you? I think I shall be able to transmit it officially, for I have still some friends at court who can separate the politician from the man.

Do not start at my consideration for your pocket; you live in the East, but I live in England where money is the great god; I hate their god,—but I worship sometimes lest my impiety should be observed and punished. Yes, I think of money. Is not poverty despised, wronged, insulted? and shall I not tremble lest my good, my innocent, my beautiful girls, and my helpless boy, should be consigned to such horrors? My life is not worth a year's purchase; who shall protect them after my death if they be poor? For their sakes I live; for their sakes I gather money by my labours; and for them I keep it as well as my nature will allow me. Ah! you are a living

example of the generosity of Englishmen towards helpless women.

. . . . . .

Your nephew, Lord Mahon, is an author, and in his book sneered at mine, went out of his way to say that it was the best French history of the war; this he thought smart, but I replied I had always thought the doing justice to [a] vanquished enemy was thoroughly English until my Lord Mahon assured me it was wholly French. Was I right? I tell you this that you may know me; I am not changed in feeling or sentiment, but you should know what I have said or done that might offend you, or I should be going to you under false colours.

Much do I like your Beni Omaya, if they be truly heroic; but beauty and courage are only gifts, not virtues. Are they compassionate? Are they just? Are they mild or cruel to their vanquished foes? Are they gentle or harsh to women and children? Do they admit women to have rights? Do they govern them by their affections or by their fears? Do they make chattels of their persons, and kill them in their tyrannical jealousy? If they do they are not heroes for me. Women are gentle, and should be free human beings, and the peculiar guardians of children, the most helpless and the most beautiful of God's creation; there can be no virtue, no generosity, where they are oppressed. I know nothing so degrading to England, as the treatment of women and children. There is a factory system grown up in England since you left it, the most horrible that the imagination can conceive Factories they are called, but they are in reality *hells*, where hundreds of children are killed yearly in protracted torture, and that cotton lords may extract gold from their bones, and marrow, and blood. Patience! patience! There will be a day of reckoning for all things; it approaches.

Farewell, dear Lady Hester. God knows whether I shall ever hear from you or write to you again, but never believe that I have not a true and deep feeling for you.

W. NAPIER

April 10*th*.—I have delayed sending this letter for a fortnight, partly to obtain a surer mode of conveyance; in which I have succeeded through my friend Lord Fitzroy-Somerset, a true Tory of your school, that is to say, an upright honest man, and a thorough gentleman, both in his private and public proceedings. Principally, however, I have waited to procure some information for you about the estates and persons you mentioned in your letter.

XVI

FRIENDSHIP AND MORE

Marjorie Fleming sends her mother her love

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMA,—I was truly happy to hear that you were all well. We are surrounded with measles at present on every side, for the Herons got it, and Isabella Heron was near Death's Door, and one night her father lifted her out of bed, and she fell down as they thought lifeless. Mr. Heron said, "That lassie's deed noo"—"I'm no deed yet." She then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half long. I have begun dancing, but am not very fond of it, for the boys strikes and mocks me.—I have been another night at the dancing; I like it better. I will write to you as often as I can; but I am afraid not every week. I long for you with the longings of a child to embrace you—to fold you in my arms. I respect you with all the respect due to a mother. You don't know how I love you. So I shall remain, your loving child,

M. FLEMING

The Dean in Dublin

(To Mrs. Martha Blount in town)

DUBLIN, *February* 29, 1727–28

DEAR PATTY,—I am told you have a mind to receive a letter from me, which is a very undecent declaration in a young lady, and almost a confession that you have a mind to write to me; for as to the fancy of looking on me as a man sans consequence, it is what I will never understand. I am told likewise you grow every day younger, and more a fool, which is directly contrary to me, who grow wiser and older, and at this rate we shall never agree. I long to see you a London lady, where you are forced to wear whole clothes, and visit in a chair, for which you must starve next summer at Petersham, with a mantua out at the sides; and spunge once a week at our house, without ever inviting us in a whole season to a cow-heel at home. I wish you would bring Mr. Pope over with you when you come; but we will leave Mr. Gay to his beggars and his operas till he is able to pay his club. How will you pass this summer for want of a Squire to Ham-Common and Walpole's Lodge? for as to Richmond Lodge and Marble Hill, they are abandoned as much as Sir Spencer Compton: and Mr. Schabe's coach, that used to give you so many a set-down, is wheeled off to St. James'. You must be forced to get a horse, and gallop with Mrs. Jansen and Miss Bedier, your greatest happiness is, that you are out of the chiding of Mrs. Howard and the Dean; but I suppose Mr. Pope is so just as to pay our arrears, and that you edify as much by him as by us, unless you are so happy that he now looks upon you as reprobate and a cast-away, of which I think he hath given me some

hints. However, I would advise you to pass this summer at Kensington, where you will be near the court, and out of his jurisdiction; where you will be teased with no lectures of gravity and morality, and where you will have no other trouble than to get into the mercers' books, and take up a hundred pounds of your principal for Quadrille. Monstrous, indeed, that a fine lady, in the prime of life and gaiety, must take up with an antiquated Dean, an old gentlewoman of four-score, and a sickly poet. I will stand by my dear Patty against the world, if Teresa beats you for your good, and I will buy her a fine whip for the purpose. Tell me, have you been confined to your lodging this winter for want of chair-hire?

Do you know that this unlucky Mr. Delany came last night to the Deanery, and being denied, without my knowledge, is gone to England this morning, and so I must send this by the post. I bought your opera to-day for sixpence, so small printed that it will spoil my eyes. I ordered you to send me your edition, but now you may keep it till you get an opportunity.

Patty, I will tell you a blunder. I am writing to Mr. Gay, and had almost finished the letter, but by mistake I took up this instead of it, and so the six lines in a hook are all to him, and therefore you must read them to him for I will not be at the trouble to write them over again. My greatest concern in the matter is, that I am afraid I continue in love with you, which is bad after near six months' absence. I hope you have done with your rash and other little disorders, and that I shall see you a fine, young, healthy, plump lady, and, if Mr. Pope chides you, threaten him that you will turn heretic. Adieu! dear Patty, and believe me to be one of your truest friends and humblest servants; and that, since I can never live

in England, my greatest happiness would be to have you and Mr. Pope condemned, during my life, to live in Ireland, he at the deanery, and you, for reputation sake, just at next door, and I will give you eight dinners a week, and a whole half dozen of pint bottles of good French wine at your lodgings, a thing you could never expect to arrive at, and every year a suit of fourteen-penny stuff, that should not be worn out at the right side; and a chair costs but sixpence a job; and you shall have Catholicity as much as you please, and the Catholic Dean of St. Patrick's, as old again as I, for your Confessor. Adieu again, dear Patty,

JON. SWIFT

Edward FitzGerald replies at once

GELDESTONE HALL, *September* 9, 1834

DEAR ALLEN,—I have really nothing to say, and I am ashamed to be sending this third letter all the way from here to Pembrokeshire for no earthly purpose: but I have just received yours: and you will know how very welcome all your letters are to me when you see how the perusal of this one has excited me to such an instant reply. It has indeed been a long time coming: but it is all the more delicious. Perhaps you can't imagine how wistfully I have looked for it: how, after a walk, my eyes have turned to the table, on coming into the room, to see it. Sometimes I have been tempted to be angry with you: but then I thought I was sure you would come a hundred miles to serve me, though you were too lazy to sit down to a letter. I suppose that people who are engaged in serious ways of life, and are of well filled minds, don't think much

about the interchange of letters with any anxiety: but I am an idle fellow, of a very ladylike turn of sentiment: and my friendships are more like loves, I think. Your letter found me reading the "Merry Wives of Windsor" too: I had been laughing aloud to myself: think what another coat of happiness came over my former good mood. You are a dear good fellow, and I love you with all my heart and soul.

The truth is I was anxious about this letter, as I really did not know whether you were married or not—or ill—I fancied you might be anything, or anywhere. . . .

As to reading I have not done much. I am going through the *Spectator*: which people think nowadays a poor book: but I honour it much.

What a noble kind of Journal it was! There is certainly a good deal of what may be called "*pill*," but there is a great deal of wisdom, I believe, only it is couched so simply that people can't believe it to be real absolute wisdom.

The little book you speak of I will order and buy. I heard from Thackeray, who is just upon the point of going to France; indeed, he may be there by this time. I shall miss him much. . . .

Farewell, my dearest fellow.

You have made me very happy to hear from you: and to know that all is so well with you.

Believe me to be your ever affectionate friend,

E. FitzGerald

Lord Nelson anticipates to Collingwood the battle of Trafalgar

October 9, 1805

I SEND you Captain Blackwood's letter: and as I hope Weazle has joined, he will have five frigates and a brig. They surely cannot escape us. I wish we could get a fine day. I send you my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in; but, my dear friend, it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll, have no little jealousies: we have only one great object in view,—that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you: and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend

NELSON AND BRONTË

Dr. Johnson makes Miss Susannah Thrale happy

About July 5, 1783

DEAREST MISS SUSY,—When you favoured me with your letter, you seemed to be in want of materials to fill it, having met with no great adventures either of peril or delight, nor done nor suffered any thing out of the common course of life.

When you have lived longer, and considered more, you will find the common course of life very fertile of observation and reflection. Upon the common course of life must our thoughts and our conversation be generally employed. Our general course of life must denomi-

nate us wise or foolish, happy or miserable; if it is well regulated, we pass on prosperously and smoothly; as it is neglected, we live in embarrassment, perplexity, and uneasiness.

Your time, my love, passes, I suppose in devotion, reading, work, and company. Of your devotions, in which I earnestly advise you to be very punctual, you may not perhaps think it proper to give me an account; and of work unless I understood it better, it will be of no great use to say much; but books and company will always supply you with materials for your letters to me, as I shall always be pleased to know what you are reading, and with what you are pleased; and shall take great delight in knowing what impression new modes or new characters make upon you, and to observe with what attention you distinguish the tempers, dispositions, and abilities of your companions. A letter may be always made out of the books of the morning or talk of the evening: and any letters from you, my dearest, will be welcome to your, etc.

Lord Collingwood writes to Lady Collingwood of his weariness of the sea and the education of their children

OCEAN, *June* 16, 1806

THIS day, my love, is the anniversary of our marriage, and I wish you many happy returns of it. If ever we have peace, I hope to spend my latter days amid my family, which is the only sort of happiness I can enjoy—after this life of labour, to retire to peace and quietness is all I look for in the world. Should we decide to change the place of our dwelling, our route would of

course be to the southward of Morpeth; but then I should be for ever regretting those beautiful views, which are nowhere to be exceeded; and even the rattling of that old waggon that used to pass our door at 6 o'clock in a winter's morning had its charms. The fact is, whenever I think how I am to be happy again, my thoughts carry me back to Morpeth, where, out of the fuss and parade of the world, surrounded by those I loved most dearly, and who loved me, I enjoyed as much happiness as my nature is capable of. Many things that I see in the world give me a distaste for the finery of it. The great knaves are not like those poor unfortunates, who, driven perhaps to distress from accidents which they could not prevent, or at least not educated in principles of honour and honesty, are hanged for some little thievery; while a knave of education and high breeding, who brandishes his honour in the eyes of the world, would rob a state to its ruin. For the first, I feel pity and compassion; for the latter, abhorrence and contempt: they are the tenfold vicious.

Have you read—but what I am more interested about, is your sister with you, and is she well and happy? Tell her—God bless her!—I wish I were with you, that we might have a good laugh. God bless me! I have scarcely laughed these three years. I am here, with a very reduced force, having been obliged to make detachments to all quarters. This leaves me weak, while the Spaniards and French within are daily gaining strength. They have patched and pieced until they have now a very considerable fleet. Whether they will venture out I do not know; if they come, I have no doubt we shall do an excellent deed, and then I will bring them to England myself.

How do the dear girls go on? I would have them

taught geometry, which is of all sciences in the world the most entertaining: it expands the mind more to the knowledge of all things in nature, and better teaching to distinguish between truths and such things as have the appearance of being truths, yet are not, than any other.

Their education, and the proper cultivation of the sense which God has given them, are the objects on which my happiness most depends. To inspire them with a love of everything that is honourable and virtuous, though in rags, and with contempt for vanity in embroidery, is the way to make them the darlings of my heart. They should not only read, but it requires a careful selection of books; nor should they ever have access to two at the same time; but when a subject is begun, it should be finished before anything else is undertaken. How would it enlarge their minds, if they should acquire a sufficient knowledge of mathematics and astronomy to give them an idea of the beauty and wonders of the creation! I am persuaded that the generality of people, and particularly fine ladies, only adore God because they are told it is proper and the fashion to go to church; but I would have my girls gain such knowledge of the works of the creation, that they may have a fixed idea of the nature of that Being who could be the Author of such a world. Whenever they have that, nothing on this side the moon will give them much uneasiness of mind. I do not mean that they should be Stoics, or want the common feelings for the sufferings that the flesh is heir to; but they would then have a source of consolation for the worst that could happen.

Tell me how do the trees which I planted thrive? Is there shade under the oaks for a comfortable summer seat? Do the poplars grow at the walk, and does the

wall of the terrace stand firm? My bankers tell me that all my money in their hands is exhausted by fees on the peerage, and that I am in their debt, which is a new epoch in my life, for it is the first time I was ever in debt since I was a midshipman. Here I get nothing; but then my expenses are nothing, and I do not want it, particularly now that I have got my knives, forks, teapot, and other things you were so kind as to send me.

Thackeray drops into verse to Mrs. Brookfield

'TIS one o'clock, the boy from *Punch* is sitting in the passage here,
It used to be the hour of lunch at Portman Street, near Portman Squeer.
O! stupid little printers' boy, I cannot write, my head is queer,
And all my foolish brains employ in thinking of a lady dear.
It was but yesterday, and on my honest word it seems a year—
As yet that pleasure was not gone, as yet I saw that lady dear—
She's left us now, my boy, and all this town, this life is blank and drear.
Thou printers' devil in the hall, did'st ever see my lady dear?
You'd understand, you little knave, I think, if you could only see her,
Why now I look so glum and grave for losing of this lady dear.
A lonely man I am in life, my business is to joke and jeer,

A Swiss Cantab

A lonely man without a wife, God took from me a lady dear.
A friend I had, and at his side,—the story dates from seven long year—
One day I found a blushing bride, a tender lady kind and dear!
They took me in, they pitied me, they gave me kindly words and cheer,
A kinder welcome who shall see, than yours, O! friend and lady dear?

(*The rest is wanting*)

M. de Bonstetten describes Cambridge, and Mr. Gray describes M. de Bonstetten

(To the Rev. Norton Nicholls)

CAMBRIDGE, *January* 6, 1770

HENCE, *vain deluding joys*, is our motto here, written on every feature, and hourly spoken by every solitary chapel bell; so that decently you can't expect no other but a very grave letter. I really beg your pardon to wrap up my thoughts in so smart a dress, as in a quarto sheet. I know they should appear in a folio leaf, but the ideas themselves shall look so solemn as to belie their dress. Though I wear not yet the black gown, and am only an inferior priest in the temple of meditation, yet my countenance is already consecrated. I never walk but with even steps and musing gait, and looks conversing with the skies; and unfold my wrinkles only when I see Mr. Gray, or think of you. Then, notwithstanding all your learnings and knowledge, I feel in such occasions that I have a heart, which you know

is as some others, a quite profane thing to carry under a black gown.

I am in a hurry from morning till evening. At eight o'clock I am roused by a young square cap, with whom I follow Satan through chaos and night. He explained me in Greek and Latin, the *sweet reluctant amorous delays* of our grandmother Eve. We finish our travels in a copious breakfast of muffins and tea. Then appear Shakespeare and old Linneus struggling together as two ghosts would do for a damned soul. Sometimes the one gets the better, sometimes the other. Mr. Gray, whose acquaintance is my greatest debt to you, is so good as to show me Macbeth, and all witches, beldams, ghosts and spirits, whose language I never could have understood without his interpretation. I am now endeavouring to dress all those people in a French dress, which is a very hard labour.

I am afraid to take a room, which Mr. Gray shall keep much better. So I stop my ever rambling pen. My respectful compliments to Mrs. Nicholls. Only remember that you have nowhere a better or more grateful friend than your DE BONSTETTEN

I loos'd Mr. Wheeler's letter and his direction.

I never saw such a boy; our breed is not made on this model. He is busy from morning to night, has no other amusement than that of changing one study for another; likes nobody that he sees here, and yet wishes to stay longer, though he has passed a whole fortnight with us already. His letter has had no correction whatever, and is prettier by half than English.

Would not you hazard your journal: I want to see what you have done this summer, though it would be safer and better to bring it yourself, methinks!

Complimens respectueux à Mad. Nichole, et à notre aimable Cousine la *Sposa*. T. G.

Corporal William Follows, 43rd Regiment, sends greeting to Colonel William Napier

FERMOY, *August* 26, 1820

HONNORED SIR,—I most humbly hope your honnor will not deem it too presumtive of your servant Wm. Follows in addressing a few lines with my sincerest thanks for the many benefits and indulgences i receved from your honnor. It was greatly talked of your coming to join the Regiment again, but I am very sorry and so is a great many—indeed, most of the Regiment, that it is not so. I hear the men when thev would see the mare, wishing that your honnor was back again, but she is gone too, so that there is nothing to remind them of you now but your honnor's deeds of justice and vaulor, witch will always be thought of by them that noes you. I hope, Sir, you will be pleased to give my duty to Mrs. Napier and i hope you will excuse my ignorant presumtive manner of writing, in witch i am very indolent, and is not able with my pen to express the warm sentiments of my mind towards your benevealent family whom everybody respecks. I have been corporal better than two years, and I was Lance-Sergeant but got reduced for a little misconduct, to Corporal again, but I am verry comfortable with my wife and child. Your honnor will undoubtedly think me very troublesum, but I hope you will impute it to the weakness of your ever most humble and duty full servant,

WM. FOLLOWS, Corpl.
43rd Regt. Lt. Infantry

A Letter of Sympathy

An Indian pupil sympathises with Sir George Grove after an accident

[1886]

KIND LÁT SAHIB SALAMAT,—I was so very sad when our darling Miss Sahiba (Miss Campbell) told me that a cab had run over you, but we hope that you are quite well now, and we think that God must have sent flying down His shining angels to guard and take care of you from getting more hurt! We often think of your kind words to us and of your smiles the first day we saw you, and we pray that God may let us see your kind face again. Now I must say Salám noble Lát Sahib. May God put a garland of love round your neck.—I remain your grateful little Indian friend, HÁFIZÁN

Thomas Gray unlocks his heart to Richard West

WHEN you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress and gets some ground; my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty steps more, I shall be just where I was; I may, better than most people, say my life is but a span, were I not afraid lest you should not believe that a person so short-lived could write even so long a letter as this; in short, I believe I must not send you the history of my own time, till I can send you that also of the reformation. However, as the most undeserving people in the world must sure have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own, in being

pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe you are not in danger of being crowded there; it is asking you to an old play, indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuse the whole piece for the sake of a few tolerable lines.

CAMBRIDGE, *May* 8, 1736

Dean Swift is anxious for Mr. Pope's health

February 7, 1735–6

IT is some time since I dined at the Bishop of Derry's, where Mr. Secretary Cary told me with great concern that you were taken very ill. I have heard nothing since; only I have continued in great pain of mind; yet for my own sake and the world's more than for yours; because I well know how little you value life both as a philosopher and a Christian, particularly the latter, wherein hardly one in a million of us heretics can equal you.

If you are well recovered, you ought to be reproached for not putting me especially out of pain, who could not bear the loss of you; although we must be for ever distant as much as if I were in the grave, for which my years and continual indisposition are preparing me every season. I have staid too long from pressing you to give me some ease by an account of your health. Pray do not use me so ill any more. I look upon you as an estate from which I receive my best annual rents, although I am never to see it. Mr. Tickell was at the same meeting under the same real concern; and so were a hundred others of this town who had never seen you. I read to the Bishop of Derry the passage in your letter

which concerned him, and his Lordship expressed his thankfulness in a manner that became him. He is esteemed here as a person of learning, and conversation, and humanity, but he is beloved by all people. He is a most excessive whig but without any appearing rancour, and his idol is King William; besides, £3,000 a year is an invincible sweetner!

I have nobody now left but you. Pray be so kind to outlive me; and then die as soon as you please; but without pain; and let us meet in a better place, if my religion will permit, but rather my virtue, although much unequal to yours. Pray, let my Lord Bathurst know how much I love him. I still insist on his remembering me, although he is too much in the world to honour an absent friend with his letters. My state of health is not to boast of; my giddiness is more or less too constant; I sleep ill, and have a poor appetite. I can as easily write a poem in the Chinese language as my own. I am as fit for matrimony as invention; and yet I have daily schemes for innumerable essays in prose, and proceed sometimes to no less than half a dozen lines, which the next morning become waste paper. What vexes me most is, that my female friends, who could bear me very well a dozen years ago, have now forsaken me; although I am not so old in proportion to them as I formerly was: which I can prove by arithmetic, for then I was double their age, which now I am not.

Pray, put me out of fear as soon as you can, about that ugly report of your illness; and let me know who this Cheseldon is, that hath so lately sprung up in your favour.

Give me also some account of your neighbour (Lord Bolingbroke), who wrote to me from Bath.

I hear he resolves to be strenuous for the taking of the test; which grieves me extremely from all the un-

prejudiced reasons I was ever able to form, and against the maxims of all wise Christian governments, and which always had some established religion, leaving at best a toleration to others. Farewell, my dearest friend: ever and upon every account that can create friendship and esteem.

Dick Steele in chains

I

SMITH STREET, WESTMINSTER, 1707

MADAM,—I lay down last night with your image in my thoughts, and have awak'd this morning in the same contemplation. The pleasing transport with which I'me delighted, has a sweetnesse in it attended with a train of ten thousand soft desires, anxieties, and cares; the day arises on my hopes with new brightnesse; youth, beauty and innocence are the charming objects that steal me from myself, and give me joys above the reach of ambition, pride or glory. Beleive me, fair one, to throw myself at your feet is giving my self the highest blisse I know on Earth. Oh hasten ye minutes! bring on the happy morning wherein to be ever her's will make me look down on thrones! Dear Molly, I am tenderly, passionately, faithfully thine, RICHARD STEELE

II

Saturday Night [*Aug.* 30, 1707]

DEAR, LOVELY MRS. SCURLOCK,—I have been in very good company, where your health, under the character of the woman I lov'd best, has been often drunk, so that I may say I am dead drunk for your sake, which is more than I die for you.—Yours,

R. STEELE

III

St. James's Coffee-house
Sept. 1, 1707

MADAM,—It is the hardest thing in the world to be in love and yet to attend to businesse. As for me, all who speake to me find me out, and I must lock myself up, or other people will do it for me. A gentleman ask'd me this morning what news from Lisbon, and I answer'd she's exquisitely handsome. Another desir'd to know when I had been last at Hampton Court, I reply'd 'twill be on Tuesday come se'nnight. Prithee allow me at least to kisse your hand before that day, that my mind may be in some composure. O love!

A thousand torments dwell about thee,
Yet who would live to live without thee?

Methinks I could write a volume to you, but all the language on earth would fail in saying how much, and with what disinterested passion, I am ever yours,

Richd. Steele

[*Steele and his Prue were married on September* 9, 1707.]

IV

March 11, 1708–9

DEAR PRUE,—I enclose five guineas, but can't come home to dinner. Dear little woman, take care of thyself, and eat and drink cheerfully.

Richd. Steele

V

Dec. 23

MY DEAR,—I shall not come home to dinner, but have fixed everything; and received money for present uses. I desire, my dear, that you have nothing

else to do but to be a darling; the way to which is to be always in good humour, and beleive I spend none of my time but to the advantage of you.—Your most obedient husband, RICHARD STEELE

VI

Sept. 30, 1710

DEAR PRUE,—I am very sleepy and tired, but could not think of closing my eyes till I had told you I am, dearest creature, your most affectionate and faithful husband, RICHARD STEELE

From the Press one in the morning.

VII

July 15, 1712

DEAR PRUE,—I thank you for your kind billet. The nurse shall have money this week. I saw your son Dick, but he is a peevish chit. You cannot conceive how pleased I am that I shall have the prettyest house to receive the prettyest woman who is the darling of RICHARD STEELE

VIII

HAMPTON COURT
Thursday, Noon, Sep. 17, 1712

DEAREST WIFE,—The finest woman in nature should not detain me an hour from you, but you must sometimes suffer the rivalship of the wisest men. Lord Halifax and Sommers leave this place after dinner and I go to Watford to speak with the Sollicitor Generall, and from thence come directly to Bloomsbury Square.—Yours faithfully, RICHARD STEELE

IX

March 28, 1713

DEAR PRUE,—I will do every thing you desire your own way.—Yours ever,

RICHARD STEELE

M. Destrosses, a French prisoner, tells Miss Seward the news of his release

AH, Madam, I am too happy to eat, and sleep no more me. I go to bed, and fall asleep one hour; dream see my wife, my children—wake, find so much better than dream—am so glad cannot drowsy.[1]

John Sterling bids his friend farewell

August 10, 1844

MY DEAR CARLYLE,—For the first time for many months it seems possible to send you a few words; merely, however, for remembrance and farewell. On higher matters there is nothing to say. I tread the common road into the great darkness, without any thought of fear and with very much of hope. Certainty, indeed, I have none. With regard to You and Me I cannot begin to write, having nothing for it but to keep shut the lids of those secrets with all the iron weights that are in my power. Towards me it is still more true than towards England, that no man has been and done

[1] This is not really the Frenchman's letter, but an extract from one of Miss Seward's letters. Lamb copied it as a letter into one of his Commonplace Books.

like you. Heaven bless you! If I can lend a hand when THERE, that will not be wanting. It is all very strange, but not one hundredth part so sad as it seems to the standers-by.

Your wife knows my mind towards her, and will believe it without asseverations.—Yours to the last,

JOHN STERLING

XVII

THE RURAL RECLUSES

Charles Napier longs for peace

BERMUDAS, 1813

MOTHER, DEAREST MOTHER,—Would to God I was rid of this vagabond life of a felon. Peace! peace! when shall we have peace?

April 20th.—Now for your Christmas letter. A year's pay to have seen aunt dance—the idea is delightful. God bless her. Oh! my wish is to be dancing with those I love, or beating them, or anything so as to be living with you, and to pitch my sword where it ought to be—with the devil! Henry says, if it were so the wish would come to have it back; but my craving for rest is such that twenty years would hardly serve to satisfy me, and that is probably ten more than I am likely to live—a soldier now-a-days is old at forty. I could get on with a duck, a chicken, a turkey, a horse, a pig, a cat, a cow and a wife, in a very contented way; why! gardening has become so interesting to me here, as to force me to give it up, lest neglect of business should follow: it is a kind of madness, with me. Gardening from morning to

night should be my occupation if there was any one to command the regiment, it won't let me think of anything else. So hang the garden, and the sweet red and blue birds that swarm around: and hang dame Nature for making me love such things, and women's company, more than the sublime pleasure of cutting people's throats, and teaching young men to do so.

Henry is wrong. I would not be tired of home. My fondness for a quiet life would never let me desire to roam in search of adventures. A few centuries back I should have been a hermit, making free however with the rules of the order, by taking a wife instead of a staff: one cross-grained thing is as good as another. It is certain that a civil life would give me one thing which a military life would not—that is I should never, my own blessed mother, get tired of the power of living with you: that would make up for all the affliction and regret of not murdering my neighbours; of living an exile, with the interesting anxiety of believing those I love suffer even to death, while imagination amuses itself with castles for months before it can be known what is their fate. How shocking to give up such delights for the painfulness of peace and quiet, and a beloved society. Be assured it will not be easy to persuade me of that; and quit the army with joy will I, when the power to do so is mine: but my luck will not go so far. God bless you all not forgetting little *Mongey* [a tame mongoose brought from the East by his brother Henry] that is if he has a soul to be saved, but I see him bristling his tail at St. Peter.

May.—What a cursed life is a soldier's, no object, no end, without *appui* for head or heart, unless that unnatural one of military fame, which to a British soldier is so trifling that it is not worth gaining. A captain who

wins the government of a country by his victories may sit down in peace, and have an interesting pursuit for the rest of his life, but war, eternal war, is horrible.

Edward FitzGerald with Nero and a Nightingale

April 28, 1839

MY DEAR ALLEN,—Some one from this house is going to London: and I will try and write you some lines now in half an hour before dinner: I am going out for the evening to my old lady who teaches me the names of the stars, and other chaste information. You see, Master John Allen, that if I do not come to London (and I have no thought of going yet) and you will not write, there is likely to be an end of our communication: not by the way that I am never to go to London again: but not just yet. Here I live with tolerable content: perhaps with as much as most people arrive at, and what if one were properly grateful one would perhaps call perfect happiness. Here is a glorious sunshiny day: all the morning I read about Nero in Tacitus lying at full length on a bench in the garden; a nightingale singing, and some red anemones eyeing the sun manfully not far off.

A funny mixture all this: Nero, and the delicacy of Spring: all very human, however. Then at half-past one lunch on Cambridge cream cheese: then a ride over hill and dale: then spudding up some weeds from the grass: and then coming in, I sit down to write to you, my sister winding red worsted from the back of a chair, and the most delightful little girl in the world chattering incessantly. So runs the world away. You think I live in Epicurean ease: but this happens to be a jolly day:

one isn't always well, or tolerably good, the weather is not always clear, nor nightingales singing, nor Tacitus full of pleasant atrocity. But such as life is, I believe I have got hold of a good end of it. . . .

Give my love to Thackeray from your upper window across the street.

So he has lost a little child: and moreover has been sorry to do so.

Well, good-bye, my dear John Allen: Auld Lang Syne My kind regards to your Lady.

Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes:
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

E. F. G

Geldestone Hall, Beccles

Mr. Gray describes his rural felicity

(To Horace Walpole)

I WAS hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road, which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you; suffice it that I arrived safe at my uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort

amidst all this is, that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous. Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverent vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

> And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
> In murm'ring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;
> While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats ME I (*il penseroso*), and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sporting squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud too, that is, talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us; he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September 1737

William Cowper speculates on the Picts

(To the Rev. John Newton)

November 30, 1783

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have neither long visits to pay nor to receive, nor ladies to spend hours in telling me that which might be told in five minutes, yet often find myself obliged to be an economist of time, and to make the most of a short opportunity. Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them, in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us under that imposing character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how, by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the antediluvian world; that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast;

I swallow a bucket of goat's milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stript off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chase, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough; I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the meantime the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus what with tilling the ground and eating the fruit of it, hunting and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied, as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find at the end of many centuries, that they had all slipt through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow.

What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this?

Thus, however, it is, and if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so. . . .

WM. COWPER

Pliny describes his villa to Apollinaris

MY villa, near the foot of the hill, is so happily placed as to catch the prospect which is seen from the top; yet the acclivity by which you ascend to it is attained by so gradual and imperceptible an ascent; that you find you are on an elevation, without having been sensible of any effort in arriving at it.

Behind, but at a great distance, are the Apennine mountains. In the serenest and calmest day we receive the winds that blow from this quarter, but spent and subdued before they reach us by passing through the space interposed. The aspect of a great part of the building is full south, and invites, as it were, the afternoon sun in summer (though somewhat earlier in the winter) into a portico of well proportioned dimensions, in which there are many divisions, and a porch or entrance hall after the manner of the ancients. Before this portico is a terrace walk, adorned with various figures, having a box hedge, and an easy slope with the figures of animals in box on the opposite sides, answering alternately to each other. In the level land below is the soft, I had almost said, the liquid Acanthus.

A walk goes round this area shut in with tonsile evergreens, cut into various forms. This leads to the gestatio which is made in the form of a circus, with box in the middle cut into various shapes with a plantation of shrubs, kept by the shears from becoming luxuriant. The whole is fenced in by a wall, covered by box cut into steps. Beyond this lies a meadow as much set off by nature, as what I have been describing is by art, which again terminates in other meadows and fields interspersed with coppices.

The portico ends in a dining room, which opens upon

the piazza with folding doors, from the windows of which you see immediately before you the meadows, and beyond a wide expanse of country.

Here also is seen the terrace and the projecting part of the villa; as also the grove and woods of the adjacent garden walk, which has the name of hippodrome.

Opposite nearly the middle of the portico, and rather to the back, is an apartment which encloses a small area shaded by four plane trees, in the middle of which a fountain running over the brim of a marble bason refreshes with its gentle sprinkling the surrounding trees, and the verdure which they overhang. In the summer apartment there is an inner sleeping room, which shuts out both light and noise; and adjoining this is a common dining room, for the reception of my familiar friends. A second portico looks upon the little area, and has the same prospect as the portico I have just described. There is besides another room, which being close to the nearest plane trees enjoys a constant shade and verdure. Its sides are composed of sculptured marble up to the balcony: and from thence to the ceiling there is a painting of boughs with birds sitting on them; not less pleasing than the marble carving; at the base of which is a little fountain, playing through several pipes into a vase, and producing a most agreeable murmur. From an angle of the portico you pass into a very spacious chamber opposite the dining room, which from some of its windows has a view of the terrace, and from others of the meadow; while from those in front you look upon a cascade which gratifies at once both the eye and the ear; for the water falls from a height foaming in the marble basin below. This chamber is very warm in the winter, as it is much exposed to the sun. And if the day is cloudy the sun's place is supplied

by the heat of an adjoining stove. From thence through a spacious and cheerful undressing room you pass to the cold bathing room, in which is a large and dark bath; but if you are disposed to swim more at large, or in warmer water, there is in the same area a large bath for that purpose, and near it a reservoir which will give you cold water if you wish to be braced again, or feel yourself too relaxed by the warm. Near the cold bath is one of moderate heat, being most kindly acted upon by the sun, but not so much affected by it as the warm bath, which projects further.

This apartment for bathing has three divisions;—two lie open to the full sun, the third is so disposed as to have less of its heat. Over the undressing room is built the tennis court, which admits of many kinds of games by means of its different circles. Near the bath is the staircase which leads to the inclosed portico, but not till the three apartments have been passed; and of those one looks upon that little area in which are the four plane trees, another upon the meadows, and the third upon several vineyards; so that they have their respective aspects and views. At one end of the enclosed portico, and taken off from it, is a chamber that looks upon the hippodrome, the vineyards and the mountains; and next to this is a room having the sun full upon it, especially in the winter. To this succeeds an apartment which connects the hippodrome with the house.

Such is the face and frontage of our villa. On the side of it is a summer inclosed portico, the position of which is high, so as not only to command the vineyards, but to seem to touch them. From the middle of this portico you enter a dining room, cooled by the salubrious breezes from the valleys of the Apennines. From the very large windows at the back you have a prospect of

the vineyards, as you have also from the folding doors, as if you were looking from the summer portico, along that side of the last mentioned dining room, where there are no windows, runs a staircase affording a private access for serving of entertaiments. At the end of this room is a sleeping chamber; underneath this apartment is an enclosed portico; looking like a grotto, which during the summer, having a coolness of its own from being impervious to the sun, neither admits nor needs any breezes from without. After you have passed both these porticos, and where the dining room ends, you again enter a portico, used in the forenoon during winter, and in the evening during summer; it leads to two general apartments, one containing four sleeping rooms, the other three, which in their turn have the benefit of the sun or shade. The hippodrome extends its length before this agreeably disposed range of building, entirely open in the middle, so that the eye on the first entrance sees the whole. It is surrounded by plane trees, which are clothed with ivy, so that while their tops flourish in their own, their bodies are decked in borrowed verdure, the ivy thus wanders over the trunks and branches, and by passing from one plane tree to another unites the neighbours together. Between these plane trees box trees are interposed, and the laurel stationed behind the box, adds its shade to that of the planes. This plantation forming the straight boundary on each side of the hippodrome, or great garden walk, ends in a semicircle, is varied in form; this part is surrounded and sheltered with cypress trees which cast round a dark and solemn shade; while the day breaks in upon the interior circular walks, which are numerous.

You are regaled at this spot with the fragrance of roses, while you find the coldness of the shade agree-

ably tempered and corrected by the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these winding walks, you re-enter the walk with its straight enclosure, but not to this only, for many ways branch out from it, divided by box-hedges. Here you have a little meadow, and here the box is cut into a thousand different forms; sometimes into letters, expressing the name of the owner, sometimes that of the artificer. In some places are little pillars, intermingled alternately with fruit trees; when on a sudden, while you are gazing on these objects of elegant workmanship, your view is opened on an imitation of natural scenery, in the middle of which is a group of dwarf plane trees.

Beyond these there commences a walk, abounding in the smooth and flexible acanthus, and trees cut into a variety of figures and names; at the upper end of which is a seat of white marble, overspread with vines, which are supported by four small Carystian pillars. From this seat the water issues through little pipes, as if pressed out by the persons sitting upon it; and first falling into a stone reservoir, is received by a polished marble basin, its descent being secretly so managed as always to keep the basin full, without running over.

Here when I take a repast; I make a table of the margin of the basin for the heavier and more substantial dishes, the lighter being made to swim about in the form of little ships and aquatic birds. Opposite is a fountain which is incessantly sending forth and taking back its contents, for the water which is sent up to a height falls back upon itself, there being two openings, through one of which it is thrown out, and through the other absorbed again.

Opposite the seat or alcove before mentioned, a

summer-house stands which reflects as much beauty upon the alcove as it borrows from it. It dazzles with its polished marble, and with its projecting doors opens into a lawn a vivid green. From its upper and lower windows the eye is greeted with other verdant scenes. Connected with this summer-house, and yet distinct from it, is a little apartment furnished with a couch to repose upon, with windows all round it, and yet sufficiently shaded and obscured by a most luxuriant vine which climbs to the top and spreads itself over the whole building.

You repose here, just as if you were in a grove, only that you are not, as in a grove, liable to be inconvenienced by a shower.

In this place also a fountain rises, but in the same moment disappears.

In many places there are seats of marble, which, like the summer-house itself, offer a great relief and accommodation to such as are fatigued with walking.

Near each seat is a little fountain. And throughout the whole hippodrome, rivulets run murmuring along, conducted by pipes, and taking whatever turn the hand of art may give them; and by these the different green plots are severally refreshed, and sometimes the whole together.

I should have avoided this particularity; for fear of being thought too minute, if I had not set out with the resolution of taking you into every corner of my house and gardens. I have not been afraid of your being weary of reading the description of a place which I am sure you would not think it wearisome to visit; especially as you can lay down my letter, and rest as often as you think proper. I must also confess, that in this description I have been indulging the attachment I feel to my villa.

"Alone I did it"

I have an affection for a place which was either begun or completed, but principally begun, by myself. In a word (for why should I not disclose to you my opinion, or, if you will, my error), I consider it to be the first duty of a writer to keep his subject in view, and from time to time to ask himself what he has professed to write upon. And he may be sure, that if he keeps close to his subject, he cannot be tedious; but most tedious, indeed, will he be, if he suffer anything to call him away, or draw him off his subject. You see how many verses Homer and Virgil have bestowed respectively upon the description of the arms of Achilles and Æneas; and neither of these poets can be called prolix on this subject, because he does no more than execute his professed design. You see how Aratus searches out and collects the smallest stars; and yet he is not chargeable with being circumstantial to excess. For this is not the diffusiveness of the writer, but of the subject itself. In the same manner (to compare small things with great), in striving to lay before your eyes my entire villa, if I take not care to wander or deviate from my subject, it is not of the size of my letter which describes, but of the villa which is described, that you are to complain. But I will return to the point from which I set out with this digression; lest I should fall under the censure of my own rules. You have before you the reason why I prefer my Tuscan villa to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tibur, and Præneste.

For in addition to what I have related concerning it, I enjoy here a deeper, solider, and securer leisure; no calls of public business; nothing near me to summon me from my quiet. All is calm and still around me; which character of the place operates like a more genial climate or clearer atmosphere in rendering the situation

salubrious. Here I am at the top of my strength in body and mind; the one I keep in exercise by study; the other by hunting. Nor does any place agree better with my family. Certainly, hitherto, (if it be not too like boasting to talk so,) I have not lost one of all those whom I brought with me hither, and may heaven continue that happiness to me, and that honour to my Villa. Farewell!

Shelley bathes at Lucca

BAGNI DI LUCCA, *July* 25, 1818

MY DEAR PEACOCK,—I received on the same day your letters marked five and six, the one directed to Pisa, and the other to Livorno, and I can assure you they are most welcome visitors.

Our life here is as unvaried by any external events as if we were at Marlow, where a sail up the river or a journey to London makes an epoch. Since I last wrote to you, I have ridden over to Lucca, once with Claire, and once alone; and we have been over to the Casino, where I cannot say there is anything remarkable, the women being far removed from anything which the most liberal annotator could interpret into beauty or grace, and apparently possessing no intellectual excellencies to compensate the deficiency. I assure you it is well that it is so, for these dances, especially the waltz, are so exquisitely beautiful that it would be a little dangerous to the newly unfrozen senses and imaginations of us migrators from the neighbourhood of the Pole. As it is—except in the dark—there could be no peril. The atmosphere here, unlike that of the rest of Italy, is diversified with clouds, which grow in the middle of the

day, and sometimes bring thunder and lightning, and hail about the size of a pigeon's egg, and decrease towards the evening, leaving only those finely woven webs of vapour which we see in English skies, and flocks of fleecy and slowly-moving clouds, which all vanish before sunset; and the nights are for ever serene, and we see a star in the east at sunset—I think it is Jupiter—almost as fine as Venus was last summer; but it wants a certain silver and aerial radiance, and soft yet piercing splendour, which belongs, I suppose, to the latter planet by virtue of its at once divine and female nature. I have forgotten to ask the ladies if Jupiter produces on them the same effect. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere. In the evening Mary and I often take a ride, for horses are cheap in this country. In the middle of the day, I bathe in a pool or fountain, formed in the middle of the forests by a torrent. It is surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, and the waterfall of the stream which forms it falls into it on one side with perpetual dashing. Close to it, on the top of the rocks, are alders, and, above, the great chestnut trees, whose long and pointed leaves pierce the deep blue sky in strong relief. The water of this pool, which, to venture an unrhythmical paraphrase, is "sixteen feet long and ten feet wide," is as transparent as the air, so that the stones and sand at the bottom seem, as it were, trembling in the light of noonday. It is exceedingly cold also. My custom is to undress and sit on the rocks, reading Herodotus, until the perspiration has subsided, and then to leap from the edge of the rock into this fountain—a practice in the hot weather exceedingly refreshing. This torrent is composed, as it were, of a succession of pools and waterfalls, up which I sometimes amuse myself by climbing when I bathe, and receiving the spray all over

my body, whilst I clamber up the moist crags with difficulty. . . .

What pleasure would it have given me if the wings of imagination could have divided the space which divides us, and I could have been of your party! I have seen nothing so beautiful as Virginia Water in its kind, and my thoughts for ever cling to Windsor Forest, and the copses of Marlow, like the clouds which hang upon the woods of the mountains, low trailing, and though they pass away, leave their best dew when they themselves have faded.

Mr. Shenstone gives Mr. Jago an account of his country contentments

THE LEASOWES, *March* 23, 1747–48

DEAR SIR,—I have sent Tom over for the papers which I left under your inspection; having nothing to add upon this head, but that the more freely and particularly you give me your opinion, the greater will be the obligation which I shall have to acknowledge. I shall be very glad if I happen to receive a good large bundle of your own compositions; in regard to which, I will observe any commands which you shall please to lay upon me.

I am favoured with a certain correspondence, by way of letter, which I told you I should be glad to cultivate; and I find it very entertaining. Pray did you receive my answer to your last letter, sent by way of London?

I should be extremely sorry to be debarred the pleasure of writing to you by the post, as often as I feel a violent propensity to describe the notable incidents of my life; which amount to about as much as the tinsel of your

little boy's hobby-horse. I am on the point of purchasing a couple of busts for the niches of my hall; and believe me, my good friend, I never proceed one step in ornamenting my little farm, but I enjoy the hopes of rendering it more agreeable to you, and the small circle of acquaintance which sometimes favour me with their company. I shall be extremely glad to see you and Mr. Fancourt when the trees are green; that is, in May; but I would not have you content yourself with a single visit this summer.

If Mr. Hardy (to whom you will make my compliments) inclines to favour me so far, you must calculate so as to wait on him whenever he finds it convenient; though I have better hopes of making his reception here agreeable to him when my lord Dudley comes down. I wonder how he would like the scheme I am upon, of exchanging a large tankard for a silver standish. I have had a couple of paintings given me since you were here. One of them is a Madonna, valued, as it is said, at ten guineas in Italy, but which you would hardly purchase at the price of five shillings. However, I am endeavouring to make it out to be one of Carlo Maratti's, who was a first hand, and famous for Madonnas; even so as to be nick-named *Cartuccio delle Madonne*, by Salvator Rosa. Two letters of the cypher (CM) agree; what shall I do with regard to the third? It is a small piece, and sadly blackened. It is about the size (though not quite the shape) of the Bacchus over the parlour door, and has much such a frame.

A person may amuse himself almost as cheaply as he pleases. I find no small delight in rearing all sorts of poultry; geese, turkeys, pullets, ducks, etc.

I am also somewhat smitten with a blackbird which I have purchased: a very fine one; brother by father, but

not by mother, to the unfortunate bird you so beautifully describe, a copy of which description you must not fail to send me ;—but as I said before, one may easily habituate one's self to cheap amusements ; that is, rural ones (for all town amusements are horridly expensive) ;—I would have you cultivate your garden ; plant flowers ; have a bird or two in the hall (they will at least amuse your children) ; write now and then a song ; buy now and then a book ; write now and then a letter to your most sincere friend, and affectionate servant.

P.S.—I hope you have exhausted all your spirit of criticism upon my verses, that you may have none left to cavil at this letter ; for I am ashamed to think, that you, in particular, should receive the dullest I ever wrote in my life.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Jago. She can go a little abroad, you say.—Tell her, I should be proud to show her the Leasowes. Adieu !

Pliny returns to Nature

(To Cornelius Tacitus)

YOU will certainly laugh (and laugh you may) when I tell you, that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has taken three noble boars. What ! (you will say, with astonishment) Pliny !—*Even he*. However, I indulge, at the same time, my beloved inactivity ; and whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with my spear, but my pencil and tablet by my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved, if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come home with my memorandums full. Believe me, this manner

of studying is not to be despised: you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. There is, besides, something in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that profound silence which is observed on these occasions, that strongly inclines the mind to meditation. For the future, therefore, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take your pencil and tablets with you, as well as your basket and bottle; for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of traversing the hills as Diana. Farewel.

William Cowper in at the death

(To Lady Hesketh)

THE LODGE, *March* 3, 1788

ONE day, last week, Mrs. Unwin and I, having taken our morning walk and returning homeward through the wilderness, met the Throckmortons.

A minute after we had met them, we heard the cry of hounds at no great distance, and mounting the broad stump of an elm which had been felled, and by the aid of which we were enabled to look over the wall, we saw them.

They were all at that time in our orchard; presently we heard a terrier, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton, which you may remember by the name of Fury, yelping with much vehemence, and saw her running through the thickets within a few yards of us at her utmost speed, as if in pursuit of something which we doubted not was the fox. Before we could reach the other end of the wilderness, the hounds entered also; and when we

arrived at the gate which opens into the grove, there we found the whole weary cavalcade assembled.

The huntsman dismounting, begged leave to follow his hounds on foot, for he was sure, he said, that they had killed him: a conclusion which I suppose he drew from their profound silence.

He was accordingly admitted, and with a sagacity that would not have dishonoured the best hound in the world, pursuing precisely the same track which the fox and dogs had taken, though he had never had a glimpse of either after their first entrance through the rails, arrived where he found the slaughtered prey. He soon produced dead reynard, and rejoined us in the grove with all his dogs about him.

Having an opportunity to see a ceremony, which I was pretty sure would never fall in my way again, I determined to stay and to notice all that passed with the most minute attention.

The huntsman having by the aid of a pitchfork lodged reynard on the arm of an elm, at the height of about nine feet from the ground, there left him for a considerable time. The gentlemen sat on their horses contemplating the fox, for which they had toiled so hard; and the hounds assembled at the foot of the tree, with faces not less expressive of the most rational delight, contemplated the same object. The huntsman remounted; cut off a foot, and threw it to the hounds;—one of them swallowed it whole like a bolus. He then once more alighted, and drawing down the fox by the hinder legs, desired the people, who were by this time rather numerous, to open a lane for him to the right and left. He was instantly obeyed, when throwing the fox to the distance of some yards, and screaming like a fiend, "tear him to pieces"—at least six times repeatedly, he con-

signed him over absolutely to the pack, who in a few minutes devoured him completely. Thus, my dear, as Virgil says, what none of the gods could have ventured to promise me, time itself, pursuing its accustomed course, has of its own accord presented me with.

I have been in at the death of a fox, and you now know as much of the matter as I, who am as well informed as any sportsman in England.—Yours, W. C.

XVIII

SHADOWS

Sir Walter Scott accepts the blow

EDINBURGH, *January* 20, 1826

MY DEAR LOCKHART,—I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements (the better thing almost of the two); to make good all claims upon Ballantyne & Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst & Co. nor Constable & Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and now must pay my own.

If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow; it is an infirmity of nature.

I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

It is easy, no doubt, for my friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better, excluded from the Bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1000 for *Marmion*. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst & Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15s. in the pound; I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment.

They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house

which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measures I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own; for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose.

A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000, which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I should have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'éclat*; but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as ever you saw me, and working at *Woodstock* like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best, it will be well.

Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and

made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship.—Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT

Lord Collingwood thanks the Duke of Clarence for ennobling him and tells him of Nelson's death

"QUEEN," OFF CARTHAGENA
December 12, 1805

I CANNOT express how great my gratitude is to your Royal Highness, for the high honour which you have done me by your letter, congratulating me on the success of His Majesty's fleet against his enemies.

This instance of condescension, and mark of your Royal Highness's kindness to one of the most humble, but one of the most faithful of His Majesty's servants is deeply engraved in my heart. I shall ever consider it as a great happiness to have merited your Royal Highness's approbation, of which the sword which you have presented to me is a testimony so highly honourable to me; for which I beg your Royal Highness will accept my best thanks, and the assurance that, whenever His Majesty's service demands it, I will endeavour to use it in support of our country's honour, and to the advancement of His Majesty's glory.

The loss which your Royal Highness and myself have sustained in the death of Lord Nelson can only be estimated by those who had the happiness of sharing his friendship.

He had all the qualities that adorn the human heart, and a head which, by its quickness of perception and depth of penetration, qualified him for the highest offices of his profession. But why am I making these observa-

tions to your Royal Highness, who knew him? Because I cannot speak of him but to do him honour.

Your Royal Highness desires to know the particular circumstance of his death. I have seen Captain Hardy but for a few minutes since, and understood from him, that at the time the *Victory* was very closely engaged in rather a crowd of ships, and that Lord Nelson was commanding some ship that was conducted much to his satisfaction, when a musket-ball struck him on the left breast. Captain Hardy took hold of him to support him, when he smiled, and said, "Hardy, I believe they have done it at last."

He was carried below; and when the ship was disengaged from the crowd, he sent an officer to inform me that he was wounded. I asked the officer if his wound was dangerous. He hesitated; then said he hoped it was not; but I saw the fate of my friend in his eye; for his look told what his tongue could not utter. About an hour after, when the action was over, Captain Hardy brought me the melancholy account of his death. He inquired frequently how the battle went, and expressed joy when the enemy were striking; in his last moments shewing an anxiety for the glory of his country, though regardless of what related to his own person.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your Royal Highness's most obedient and most humble servant.

Charles Lamb loses an old friend

COLEBROOKE ROW, ISLINGTON
Saturday, January 20, 1827

DEAR ROBINSON,—I called upon you this morning, and found that you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris

has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not, or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—"in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;" and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended, but they were old trusty perennials, staples

that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

> "We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
> In spite of the devil and *Brussels Gazette*!"

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the *Brussels Gazette* now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. "How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?" His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an inaccessible hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect; and poor deaf Richard—and the more helpless for being so—is thrown on the wide world.

My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers, to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.—Yours ever,

CHARLES LAMB

Jeremy Taylor tells John Evelyn of the death of a little son

July 19, 1656

DEARE SIR,—I am in some little disorder by reason of the death of a little child of mine, a boy that lately made us very glad; but now he rejoyces in his little orbe, while we thinke, and sigh, and long to be as safe as he is. . . .

Jeremy Taylor wishes John Evelyn well

September 15, 1656

SIR,—I pray God continue your health and his blessings to you and your deare lady and pretty babies; for which I am daily obliged to pray, and to use all opportunities by which I can signify that I am, deare Sir, your most affectionate and endeared servant,

JER. TAYLOR

Jeremy Taylor comforts John Evelyn in the death of a son

DEARE SIR,—If dividing and sharing greifes were like the cutting of rivers, I dare say to you, you would find your streame much abated; for I account myselfe to have a great cause of sorrow, not onely in the diminution of the numbers of your joys and hopes, but in the losse of that pretty person, your strangely hopeful boy. I cannot tell all my owne sorrowes without adding to yours; and the causes of my real sadnesse in your loss are so just and so reasonable, that I can

no otherwise comfort you but by telling you, that you have very great cause to mourne: so certaine it is that greife does propagate as fire does. You have enkindled my funeral torch, and by joining mine to yours, I doe but encrease the flame. *Hoc me malè urit*, is the best signification of my apprehension of your sad story. But, Sir, I cannot choose, but I must hold another and a brighter flame to you, it is already burning in your heart; and if I can but remoove the darke side of the lanthorne, you have enoughe within you to warme yourself, and to shine to others. Remember, Sir, your two boyes are two bright starres, and their innocence is secured, and you shall never hear evil of them agayne. Their state is safe, and heaven is given to them upon very easy termes; nothing but to be borne and die. It will cost you more trouble to get where they are; and amongst other things one of the hardnesses will be, that you must overcome even this just and reasonable greife; and, indeed, though the greife hath but too reasonable a cause, yet it is much more reasonable that you master it. For besides that they are no loosers, but you are the person that complaines, doe but consider what you would have suffer'd for their interest: you [would] have suffered them to goe from you, to be great princes in a strange country: and if you can be content to suffer your owne inconvenience for their interest, you command [commend?] your worthiest love, and the question of mourning is at an end. But you have said and done well, when you looke upon it as a rod of God; and he that so smites here will spare hereafter: and if you, by patience and submission, imprint the discipline upon your own flesh, you kill the cause, and make the effect very tolerable; because it is, in some sense, chosen, and therefore, in no sense,

insufferable. Sir, if you doe not looke to it, time will snatch your honour from you, and reproach you for not effecting that by Christian philosophy which time will doe alone. And if you consider, that of the bravest men in the world, we find the seldomest stories of their children, and the apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons, that sound most in story, died childlesse: you will find it is a rare act of Providence so to impose upon worthy men a necessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions and discourses, governments and reasonings. If the breach be never repair'd, it is because God does not see it fitt to be; and if you will be of his mind, it will be much the better But, Sir, you will pardon my zeale and passion for your comfort, I will readily confesse that you have no need of any discourse from me to comfort you. Sir, now you have an opportunity of serving God by passive graces; strive to be an example and a comfort to your lady, and by your wise counsel and comfort, stand in the breaches of your owne family, and make it appeare that you are more to her than ten sons. Sir, by the assistance of Almighty God, I purpose to wait on you some time next weeke, that I may be a witnesse of your Christian courage and bravery; and that I may see, that God never displeases you, as long as the main stake is preserved, I meane your hopes and confidences of heaven. Sir, I shal pray you for all that you can want, that is, some degrees of comfort and a present mind; and shal alwayes doe you honour, and faine also would doe you service, if it were in the power, as it is in the affections and desires of, dear Sir, your most affectionate and obliged friend and servant,

JER. TAYLOR

February 17, 1657–8

Dr. Johnson moralizes on death

"As he opened a note which his servant brought to him, he said, 'An odd thought strikes me: we shall receive no letters in the grave.'"

BOSWELL (of DR. JOHNSON)

XIX

SIX POSTSCRIPTS

POSTSCRIPT I

REMARKS ON THE GENTLEST ART BY GOOD INTELLECTS

I. Dr. Johnson (in his *Dictionary*)

LETTER

2. A written message; an epistle.

> They used to write it on the top of *letters*.—*Shakespeare.*
>
> I have a *letter* from her
> Of such contents as you will wonder at.—*Shakespeare.*

When a Spaniard would write a *letter* by him, the Indian would marvel how it should be possible, that he, to whom he came, should be able to know all things.—*Abbot.*

The asses will do very well for trumpeters, and the hares will make excellent *letter* carriers.—*L'Estrange's Fables.*

The stile of *letters* ought to be free, easy, and natural; as near approaching to familiar conversation as possible: the two best qualities in conversation are, good humour and good breeding; those *letters* are therefore certainly the best that show the most of these two qualities.—*Walsh.*

Mrs. P. B. has writ to me, and is one of the best *letter* writers I know; very good sense, civility and friendship, without any stiffness or constraint.—*Swift.*

II. Samuel and Antony Weller

MR. WELLER having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who, in his then state of excitement and worry, was by no means displeased at being left alone, set forth, long before the appointed hour, and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he paused and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assemble near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and confusion of the old-lady population of these realms. Having loitered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of bye streets and courts. As he was sauntering away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window; but without further explanation it does appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain pictures which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed, with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly-coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a

male and female cannibal in modern attire, the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same, were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking; a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, London, appeared in the distance; and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of, to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one-and-sixpence each.

"I should ha' forgot it; I should certainly ha' forgot it!" said Sam; so saying, he at once stepped into the stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market at a good round pace, very different from his recent lingering one. Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board on which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

"He won't be here this three-quarters of an hour or more," said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar.

"Wery good, my dear," replied Sam. "Let me have nine-penn'oth o' brandy-and-water luke, and the inkstand, will you, miss?"

The brandy-and-water luke, and the inkstand, having been carried into the little parlour, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent their blazing, and carried away the poker to preclude the possibility of the fire being stirred, without the full privity and concurrence of the Blue Boar being first had and obtained, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then looking carefully at the pen to see that there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of bread under the paper, Sam tucked up the cuffs of his coat, squared his elbows, and composed himself to write.

To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves practically to the science of penmanship, writing a letter is no very easy task; it being always considered necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm, so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, and, while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unquestionably of the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer; and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

"Vell, Sammy," said the father.

"Vell, my Prooshan Blue," responded the son, laying down his pen. "What's the last bulletin about mother-in-law?"

"Mrs. Veller passed a very good night, but is uncommon perwerse and unpleasant this mornin'. Signed upon oath, S. Veller, Esquire Senior. That's the last vun as was issued, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, untying his shawl.

"No better yet?" inquired Sam.

"All the symptoms aggerawated," replied Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "But wot's that you're a-doin' of? Pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam, with slight embarrassment; "I've been a-writin'."

"So I see," replied Mr. Weller. "Not to any young 'ooman, I hope, Sammy?"

"Why, it's no use a-sayin' it ain't," replied Sam; "it's a walentine."

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word.

"A walentine," replied Sam.

"Samivel, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents, "I didn't think you'd ha' done it. Arter the warnin' you've had o' your father's wicious propensities; arter all I've said to you upon this here wery subject; arter actiwally seein' and bein' in the company o' your own mother-in-law, vich I should ha' thought wos a moral lesson as no man could never ha' forgotten to his dyin' day! I didn't think you'd ha' done it, Sammy, I didn't think you'd ha' done it!" These reflections were too much for the good old man. He raised Sam's tumbler to his lips and drank off its contents.

"Wot's the matter now?" said Sam.

"Nev'r mind, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "it'll be a wery agonisin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the wery old turkey remarked wen the farmer said he wos afeerd he should be obliged to kill him for the London market."

"Wot'll be a trial?" inquired Sam.

"To see you married, Sammy—to see you a dilluded wictim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all wery capital," replied Mr. Weller. "It's a dreadful trial to a father's feelin's, that 'ere, Sammy."

"Nonsense," said Sam. "I ain't a-goin' to get married, don't you fret yourself about that; I know you're a judge of these things. Order in your pipe and I'll read you the letter. There!"

We cannot distinctly say whether it was the prospect of the pipe, or the consolatory reflection that a fatal disposition to get married ran in the family, and couldn't be helped, which calmed Mr. Weller's feelings, and caused his grief to subside. We should be rather disposed to say that the result was attained by combining the two sources of consolation, for he repeated the second in a low tone, very frequently; ringing the bell meanwhile, to order in the first. He then divested himself of his upper coat; and lighting the pipe and placing himself in front of the fire with his back towards it, so that he could feel its full heat, and recline against the mantelpiece at the same time, turned towards Sam, and, with a countenance greatly mollified by the softening influence of tobacco, requested him to "fire away."

Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air—

"'Lovely——'"

"Stop," said Mr. Weller, ringing the bell. "A double glass o' the inwariable, my dear."

"Very well, sir," replied the girl; who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared.

"They seem to know your ways here," observed Sam.

"Yes," replied his father, "I've been here before, in my time. Go on Sammy."

"'Lovely creetur,'" repeated Sam.

"'Tain't in poetry, is it?" interposed his father.

"No, no," replied Sam.

"Wery glad to hear it," said Mr. Weller. "Poetry's unnat'ral; no man ever talked poetry 'cept a beadle on boxin'-day, or Warren's blackin', or Rowland's oil, or some of them low fellows; never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin again, Sammy."

Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows:—

"'Lovely creetur I feel myself a damned——'"

"That ain't proper," said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"No; it ain't 'damned,'" observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, "it's 'shamed,' there's a blot there —'I feel myself ashamed.'"

"Wery good," said Mr. Weller. "Go on."

"'Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir——' I forget what this here word is," said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

"Why don't you look at it, then?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"So I *am* a-lookin' at it," replied Sam, "but there's another blot. Here's a 'c,' and a 'i,' and a 'd.'"

"Circumwented, p'raps," suggested Mr. Weller.

"No, it ain't that," said Sam; "'circumscribed'; that's it."

"That ain't as good a word as 'circumwented,' Sammy," said Mr. Weller gravely.

"Think not?" said Sam.

"Nothin' like it," replied his father.

"But don't you think it means more?" inquired Sam.

"Vell p'raps it's a more tenderer word," said Mr. Weller, after a few moments' reflection. "Go on, Sammy."

"'Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed

in a-dressin' of you, for you *are* a nice gal and nothin' but it.'"

"That's a wery pretty sentiment," said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

"Yes, I think it is raythe good," observed Sam, highly flattered.

"Wot I like in that 'ere style of writin'," said the elder Mr. Weller, "is, that there ain't no callin' names in it—no Wenuses, nor nothin' o' that kind. Wot's the good o' callin' a young 'ooman a Wenus or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam.

"You might jist as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arms at once, which is wery well known to be a col-lection o' fabulous animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on, Sammy," said Mr. Weller.

Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows; his father continuing to smoke, with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying.

"'Afore I see you, I thought all women was alike.'"

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller parenthetically.

"'But now,'" continued Sam, "'now I find what a reg'lar soft-headed, inkred'lous turnip I must ha' been; for there ain't nobody like you, though I like you better than nothin' at all.' I thought it best to make that raythe strong," said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

"'So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen'l'm'n in difficulties did, ven he valked out of a Sunday—to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my hart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took

by the profeel macheen (wich p'raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook at the end to hang it up by, and all in two minutes and a quarter.'"

"I am afeerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy," said Mr. Weller dubiously.

"No, it don't," replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point—

"'Except of me Mary my dear as your walentine and think over what I've said.—My dear Mary I will now conclude.' That's all," said Sam.

"That's rather a sudden pull-up, ain't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll vish there wos more, and that's the great art o' letter-writin'."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "there's somethin' in that; and I wish your mother-in-law 'ud only conduct her conwersation on the same gen-teel principle. Ain't you a-goin' to sign it?"

"That's the difficulty," said Sam; "I don't know what *to* sign it."

"Sign it—'Veller,'" said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.

"Won't do," said Sam. "Never sign a walentine with your own name."

"Sign it 'Pickwick,' then," said Mr. Weller; "it's a wery good name, and a easy one to spell."

"The wery thing," said Sam. "I *could* end with a werse; what do you think?"

"I don't like it, Sam," rejoined Mr. Weller. "I never know'd a respectable coachman as wrote poetry, 'cept one, as made an affectin' copy o' werses the night afore he was hung for a highway robbery; and *he* wos only a Cambervell man, so even that's no rule."

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter—

"Your love-sick
Pickwick."

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a downhill direction in one corner: "To Mary, Housemaid, at Mr. Nupkins's, Mayor's, Ipswich, Suffolk"; and put it into his pocket, wafered, and ready for the general post.

CHARLES DICKENS

III. Gregory (in a letter to Nicobulus)

OF those who write epistles, (since you ask for my sentiments on this subject,) my opinion is, that some make their letters too lengthy, and others far too short for the occasion. Both these depart from the just mean, as archers miss the mark, whether they shoot beyond it, or come short of it. For the error is the same, though it is committed in opposite ways. The measure of letter-writing is the requirement of the subject matter For we neither ought to be long where there is not much to say, nor brief where there is a press of matter. What then? Is it proper to measure wisdom by the Persian line, or by the cubits of children, and to write so uncompletely as to write, in fact, nothing; emulating the noontide shadows which lie immediately before us at our feet, the limits whereof are scarcely visible, and are rather glanced at than seen, and are, if I may so say, the shadows of shades? Whereas the right proceeding is to avoid the excess in either way, and to adopt a middle course. Concerning the concise method of writing this is my opinion.

Concerning perspicuity this is plain, that we should avoid as much as possible the style of an essay, and aim rather at a familiar phraseology, and to say all in a few words.

That is the best epistle, and the most happily composed, which is calculated to bring its matter home both to the learned and to the unlearned,—to the one as being accommodated in language to the level of the multitude; and to the other, as being raised in thought above that level; that which is understood as soon as read. For it is equally incongruous that a riddle should be plain, and that an epistle should need interpretation.

The third requisite in letter-writing is grace of expression. For we must avoid a diction dry and harsh, and expressions that are coarse, inelegant, or dull; as where a letter is devoid of pointed sentences, adages, apophthegms, yes, and of jests too, and enigmatical allusions, by which this sort of composition is rendered more pleasing. But let us avoid excess in the use of these things. By the want of them we are dull and insipid; by the adoption of them we are in danger of being carried too far. We should use them to the same extent as purple is admitted into the texture of woven garments. We may introduce figures, too, but these should be few, and not immodest. But let us cast to the sophists antitheses, jingling words, and balanced sentences with similar terminations. Or if we do occasionally introduce them, let it be in a playful way, and not when we are treating of serious matters. I will end my observations on this subject by mentioning what I once heard from a man of wit about the eagle. When the birds were contending for the throne, and some came adorned in one way, some in another, it was his greatest ornament to appear before them unadorned. This also should

be especially observed in epistles,—to be without the affectation of ornament, and to come as close as possible to nature. Thus far, in an epistle, I have sent you my sentiments concerning epistles. But a subject such as this, perhaps, is not the province of one who ought to be engaged in higher matters. What else belongs to the subject you may search for yourself with your quickness of apprehension; and those who are wise in these matters will assist your enquiries.

IV. James Howell

IT was a quaint difference the Ancients did put 'twixt a *Letter*, and an *Oration*; that the one should be attir'd like a Woman, the other like a Man: the latter of the two is allow'd large-side Robes, as long Periods, Parentheses, Similes, Examples, and other parts of Rhetorical flourishes: But a *Letter* or *Epistle* should be short-coated, and closely couch'd; a Hungerlin becomes a *Letter* more handsomly than a Gown. Indeed we should write as we speak; and that's a true familiar Letter which expresseth one's Mind, as if he were discoursing with the Party to whom he writes in succinct and short Terms. The *Tongue* and the *Pen* are both of them Interpreters of the Mind; but I hold the *Pen* to be the more faithful of the two: The *Tongue in udo posita*, being seated in a moist slippery place may fail and falter in her sudden extemporal Expressions; but the *Pen* having a greater advantage of premeditation, is not so subject to error, and leaves things behind it upon firm and authentic record.

Colloquial Eloquence

V. Sir James Mackintosh

WHEN a woman of feeling, fancy, and accomplishment has learned to converse with ease and grace, from long intercourse with the most polished society, and when she writes as she speaks, she must write letters as they ought to be written, if she has acquired just as much habitual correctness as is reconcilable with the air of negligence. A moment of enthusiasm, a burst of feeling, a flash of eloquence may be allowed, but the intercourse of society, either in conversation or in letters, allows no more. Though interdicted from the long continued use of elevated language, they are not without a resource. There is a part of language which is disdained by the pedant or the declaimer, and which both if they knew its difficulty would dread; it is formed of the most familiar phrases and turns in daily use by the generality of men, and is full of energy and vivacity, bearing upon it the mark of those keen feelings and strong passions from which it springs. It is the employment of such phrases which produces what may be called colloquial eloquence. Conversation and letters may be thus raised to any degree of animation without departing from their character. Anything may be said, if it be spoken in the tone of society; the highest guests are welcome, if they come in the easy undress of the club; the strongest metaphor appears without violence, if it is familiarly expressed; and we the more easily catch the warmest feeling, if we perceive that it is intentionally lowered in expression out of condescension to our calmer temper. It is thus that harangues and declamations, the last proof of bad taste and bad manners in conversation, are avoided, while the fancy and the heart find the means of pouring forth all their stores. To meet this despised

part of language in a polished dress, and producing all the effects of wit and eloquence, is a constant source of agreeable surprise. This is increased when a few bolder and higher words are happily wrought into the texture of this familiar eloquence. To find what seems so unlike author-craft in a book, raises the pleasing astonishment to the highest degree. . . . Letters must not be on a subject.

VI. Dr. Grimstone

"DON'T begin to write yet, any of you," said the Doctor; "I have a few words to say to you first. In most cases, and as a general rule, I think it wisest to let every boy commit to paper whatever his feelings may dictate to him. I wish to claim no censorship over the style and diction of your letters. But there have been so many complaints lately from the parents of some of the less advanced of you, that I find myself obliged to make a change. Your father particularly, Richard Bultitude," he added, turning suddenly upon the unlucky Paul, "has complained bitterly of the slovenly tone and phrasing of your correspondence; he said very justly that they would disgrace a stable-boy, and unless I could induce you to improve them, he begged he might not be annoyed by them in future."

It was by no means the least galling part of Mr. Bultitude's trials, that former forgotten words and deeds of his in his original condition were constantly turning up at critical seasons, and plunging him deeper into the morass just when he saw some prospect of gaining firm ground.

So on this occasion, he did remember that, being in a more than usually bad temper one day last year, he had, on receiving a sprawling, ill-spelt application from Dick

for more pocket money, to buy fireworks for the 5th of November, written to make some such complaint to the schoolmaster. He waited anxiously for the Doctor's next words; he might want to read the letters before they were sent off, in which case Paul would not be displeased, for it would be an easier and less dangerous way of putting the Doctor in possession of the facts.

But his complaints were to be honoured by a much more effectual remedy, for it naturally piqued the Doctor to be told that boys instructed under his auspices wrote like stable-boys. "However," he went on, "I wish your people at home to be assured from time to time of your welfare, and to prevent them from being shocked and distressed in future by the crudity of your communications, I have drawn up a short form of letter for the use of the lower boys in the second form—which I shall now proceed to dictate. Of course all boys in the first form, and all in the second above Bultitude and Jolland, will write as they please, as usual. Richard, I expect you to take particular pains to write this out neatly. Are you all ready? Very well, then . . . now"; and he read out the following letter, slowly—

"My dear Parents (or parent according to circumstances), comma" (all of which several took down most industriously)—"You will be rejoiced to hear that, having arrived with safety at our destination, we have by this time fully resumed our customary regular round of earnest work relieved and sweetened by hearty play." ("Have you all got 'hearty play' down?" inquired the Doctor rather suspiciously, while Jolland observed in an undertone that it would take some time to get *that* down.) "I hope, I trust I may say without undue conceit, to have made considerable progress in my school-tasks before I rejoin the family circle for the

Easter vacation, as I think you will admit when I inform you of the programme we intend" ("D.V. in brackets and capital letters"—as before, this was taken down verbatim by Jolland, who probably knew very much better), "intend to work out during the term.

"In Latin, the class of which I am a member propose to thoroughly master the first book of Virgil's magnificent Epic, need I say I refer to the soul-moving story of the Pious Æneas?" (Jolland was understood by his near neighbours to remark that he thought the explanation distinctly advisable), "whilst, in Greek, we have already commenced the thrilling account of the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, that master of strategy! nor shall we, of course, neglect in either branch of study the syntax and construction of those two noble languages" —("noble languages!" echoed the writers mechanically, contriving to insinuate a touch of irony into the words).

"In German, under the able tutelage of Herr Stohwasser, who, as I may possibly have mentioned to you in casual conversation, is a graduate of the University of Heidelberg" ("and a silly old hass," added Jolland, parenthetically), "we have resigned ourselves to the spell of the Teutonian Shakespeare" (there was much difference of opinion as to the manner of spelling the "Teutonian Shakespeare") "as, in my opinion, Schiller may be not inaptly termed, and our French studies comprise such exercises, and short poems and tales, as are best calculated to afford an insight into the intricacies of the Gallic tongue.

"But I would not have you imagine, my dear parents (or parent, as before), that, because the claims of the intellect have been thus amply provided for, the requirements of the body are necessarily overlooked!

"Chevy"

"I have no intention of becoming a mere bookworm, and, on the contrary, we have had one excessively brisk and pleasant game at football already this season, and should, but for the unfortunate inclemency of the weather, have engaged again this afternoon in the mimic warfare

"In the playground our favourite diversion is the game of chevy,' so called from that engagement famed in ballad and history (I allude to the battle of Chevy Chase), and indeed, my dear parents, in the rapid alternations of its fortunes and the diversity of its incident, the game (to my mind) bears a striking resemblance to the accounts of that ever-memorable contest.

"I fear I must now relinquish my pen, as the time allotted for correspondence is fast waning to its close, and tea-time is approaching. Pray give my kindest remembrances to all my numerous friends and relatives, and accept my fondest love and affection for yourselves and the various other members of the family circle.

"I am, I am rejoiced to say, in the enjoyment of excellent health, and surrounded as I am by congenial companions, and employed in interesting and agreeable pursuits, it is superfluous to add that I am happy.

"And now, my dear parents, believe me, your dutiful and affectionate son, so and so."

The Doctor finished his dictation with a roll in his voice, as much as to say, "I think that will strike your respective parents as a chaste and classical composition! I think so!"

From *Vice Versâ* by F. ANSTEY

POSTSCRIPT II

THE EARLIEST LETTER

The Psalmist takes steps to remove an obstacle

[*Circa* B.C. 1035]

(David to Joab, sent by the hand of Uriah)

SET ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

POSTSCRIPT III

THE EARLIEST LETTER BY AN ENGLISH WOMAN. WITHOUT POSTSCRIPT

Lady Pelham informs Sir John Pelham of the siege of Pevensey Castle. The first letter extant by an English woman (spelling modernised)

[1399]

MY DEAR LORD,—I recommend me to your high lordship, with heart and body and all my poor might. And with all this I thank you as my dear Lord, dearest and best beloved of all earthly lords. I say for me, and thank you, my dear Lord, with all this that I said before of [for] your comfortable letter that you sent me from Pontefract, that came to me on Mary Magdalen's day: for by my troth I was never so glad as when I heard by your letter that ye were strong enough with the Grace of God for to keep you from the malice of your enemies. And, dear Lord, if it like to your high Lordship that as soon as ye might that I might hear of your gracious speed, which God Almighty continue and increase. And, my dear Lord, if it like you to know *my* fare, I am here laid by in a manner

of a siege with the County of Sussex, Surrey, and a great parcel of Kent, so that I may not [go] out nor no victuals get me, but with much hazard. Wherefore, my dear, if it like you by the advice of your wise counsel for to set remedy of the salvation of your castle and withstand the malice of the shires aforesaid. And also that ye be fully informed of the great malice-workers in these shires which have so despitefully wrought to you, and to your castle, to your men and to your tenants; for this country have they wasted for a great while.

Farewell, my dear Lord! the Holy Trinity keep you from your enemies, and soon send me good tidings of you. Written at Pevensey, in the castle, on St. Jacob's day last past, by your own poor J. PELHAM

To my true Lord.

POSTSCRIPT IV

THE BABOO AS LETTER-WRITER

I

MOST RESPECTED SIR,—I fall at your feet; if you please save my life and make me happy. I have the strongest desire to have the Biscyle to ride on. Through the contemplation, I have no sleep either in the day or in the night. I have been reduced to half, and if I continue the same course, I do not know what my fate will be. I have no money to buy it. Piety has never become fruitless, and so the generosity. Fame should remain after the man on the world, and this is the duty which man should do. I have been submitted myself to your honour, therefore your honour should do whatever your honour likes. Your honour should not think that you present me only a Biscyle worth of sum rupees, but my life which will perhaps serve your honour for your life. Now I have become like a helpless sick person and you have become a doctor. If you give me medicine I shall recover, otherwise not. Please be kind to me. God will be pleased with you which is necessary for a man to be happy. Let God excite tenderness in your honour's heart. Let

your great kind and noble mind order your generous hands to present this miserable man with your most beautiful "Biscyle."—Sir, I am your's obediently, etc.

II

HONOURABLE SIR,—Kindly excuse this poor thy servant from attending on your Honour's office this day, as I am suffering from the well-known disease commonly called ache of the interior economy, and I shall ever pray.—Yours ever painful,

RAM CHUNDER

P.S.—Oh, death, where is thy sting?

III

MOST EXALTED SIR,—It is with most habitutily devout expressions of my sensitive respect that I approach the clemency of your masterful position with the self-dispraising utterance of my esteem and the also forgotten-by-myself assurance that in my own mind I shall be freed from the assumption that I am asking unpardonable donations if I assert that I desire a short respite from my exertions, as I am suffering from three boils, as per margin. I have the honourable delight of subscribing myself your exalted reverence's servitor,

JANJANBOL PANJAMJAUB

IV

MOST HONORD AND LITTERAL SIR,—I am poor man now taking trouble to write Your Honour. I am too much fond of mother tongue, *alias*

English, and therefore being profoundly desirous to be master of this tongue, I am writing you. I am married man, my wife by the blessing of God has been too fruitful and thereby multiplying many sons and daughters, children causing severest distress to this poor petitioner's pockets in the pecuniary manner. But nevertheless I am strong minded and with energy and time will overthrow all the difficulties which do at present beset my matrimonial bed. As, Sir, I cannot afford to purchase your universal renowned paper must asking of your Honour a great and magnanimous favour to letting me have free paper in order to magnify my intellect and in time become perhaps a author of some book or books may be. I will then remember your kind Honour's great kindness and will ever circumcise myself to Your Honour your dutiful tutor and other things. I will write articles to your paper as payment can't give. I will make your Honour present of book when I write.

V

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH, — That your honour's servant is poor man in agricultural behaviour, and much depends on season for the staff of life, therefore he prays that you will favour upon him, and take him into your saintly service, that he may have some permanently labour for the support of his soul and his family; wherefore he falls upon his family's bended-knees, and implores to you of this merciful consideration to a damnable miserable, like your honour's unfortunate petitioner. That your lordship's honour's servant was too much poorly during the last rains and was resuscitated by much medicines which made magnificent excavations in the coffers of your honourable servant,

whose means are circumcised by his large family, consisting of five female women, and three masculine, the last of which are still taking milk from mother's chest, and are damnably noiseful through pulmonary catastrophe in their interior abdomen. Besides the above-named, an additional birth is, through grace of God, very shortly occurring to my beloved wife of bosom. . . . That your honour's damnable servant was officiating in several capacities during past generations, but has become too much old for espousing hard labour in this time of his bodily life ; but was not drunkard, nor fornicator, nor thief, nor swindler, nor any of these kind, but was always pious, affectionate to his numerous family consisting of the aforesaid five female women, and three males, the last of whom are still milking the parental mother. That your generous honour's lordship's servant was entreating to the Magistrate for employment in Municipality to remove filth, etc., but was not granted the petitioner. Therefore your generous lordship will give to me some easy work, in the —— Department, or something of this sort. For which act of kindness your noble lordship's poor servant will, as in duty bound, pray for your longevity and procreativeness. I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant.

POSTSCRIPT V

EXAMPLES OF THE GENTLEST ART DRAWN FROM WORKS OF FICTION

I

Fanny Squeers describes Nicholas Nickleby's outrage

DOTHEBOYS HALL, *Thursday Morning*

SIR,—My pa requests me to write to you. The doctors considering it doubtful whether he will ever recuvver the use of his legs which prevents his holding a pen.

We are in a state of mind beyond everything, and my pa is one mask of brooses both blue and green likewise two forms are steepled in his Goar. We were kimpelled to have him carried down into the kitchen where he now lays. You will judge from this that he has been brought very low.

When your nevew that you recommended for a teacher had done this to my pa and jumped upon his body with his feet and also langwedge which I will not pollewt my pen with describing, he assaulted my ma with dreadful violence, dashed her to the earth, and drove her back comb several inches into her head. A very little more

and it must have entered her skull. We have a medical certifiket that if it had, the tortershell would have affected the brain.

Me and my brother were then the victims of his feury since which we have suffered very much which leads us to the arrowing belief that we received some injury in our insides, especially as no marks of violence are visible externally. I am screaming out loud all the time I write and so is my brother, which takes off my attention rather, and I hope will excuse mistakes.

The monster having sasiated his thirst for blood ran away, taking with him a boy of desperate caracter that he had excited to rebellyon, and a garnet ring belonging to my ma, and not having been apprehended by the constables is supposed to have been took up by some stage-coach. My pa begs that if he comes to you the ring may be returned, and that you will let the thief and assassin go, as if we prosecuted him he would only be transported, and if he is let go he is sure to be hung before long, which will save us trouble, and be much more satisfactory.—Hoping to hear from you when convenient, I remain, yours and cetrer,

FANNY SQUEERS

P.S.—I pity his ignorance and despise him.

II

Mr. Micawber's first letter to David Copperfield

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—The die is cast—all is over. Hiding the ravages of care with a sickly mask of mirth, I have not informed you, this evening, that there is no hope of the remittance! Under these circumstances, alike humiliating to endure,

humiliating to contemplate, and humiliating to relate, I have discharged the pecuniary liability contracted at this establishment, by giving a note of hand, made payable fourteen days after date, at my residence, Pentonville, London. When it becomes due, it will not be taken up. The result is destruction. The bolt is impending, and the tree must fall.

Let the wretched man who now addresses you, my dear Copperfield, be a beacon to you through life. He writes with that intention, and in that hope. If he could think himself of so much use, one gleam of day might, by possibility, penetrate into the cheerless dungeon of his remaining existence — though his longevity is, at present (to say the least of it), extremely problematical.

This is the last communication, my dear Copperfield, you will ever receive from the beggared outcast,

WILKINS MICAWBER

III

Mr. Micawber has prospects

MY DEAR COPPERFIELD,—You may possibly not be unprepared to receive the intimation that something has turned up. I may have mentioned to you on a former occasion that I was in expectation of such an event.

I am about to establish myself in one of the provincial towns of our favoured island (where the society may be described as a happy admixture of the agricultural and the clerical), in immediate connection with one of the learned professions. Mrs. Micawber and our offspring will accompany me. Our ashes, at a future period,

will probably be found commingled in the cemetery attached to the venerable pile, for which the spot to which I refer has acquired a reputation, shall I say from China to Peru?

In bidding adieu to the modern Babylon, where we have undergone many vicissitudes, I trust not ignobly, Mrs. Micawber and myself cannot disguise from our minds that we part, it may be for years and it may be for ever, with an individual linked by strong associations to the altar of our domestic life. If, on the eve of such a departure, you will accompany our mutual friend, Mr. Thomas Traddles, to our present abode, and there reciprocate the wishes natural to the occasion, you will confer a Boon on one who is ever yours,

WILKINS MICAWBER

IV

Mrs. Micawber expresses her fears and hopes

MY best regards to Mr. Thomas Traddles, and if he should still remember one who formerly had the happiness of being well acquainted with him, may I beg a few moments of his leisure time? I assure Mr. T. T. that I would not intrude upon his kindness, were I in any other position than on the confines of distraction.

Though harrowing to myself to mention, the alienation of Mr. Micawber (formerly so domesticated) from his wife and family, is the cause of my addressing my unhappy appeal to Mr. Traddles, and soliciting his best indulgence. Mr. T. can form no adequate idea of the change in Mr. Micawber's conduct, of his wildness, of his violence. It has gradually augmented, until it assumes the appearance of aberration of intellect.

Scarcely a day passes, I assure Mr. Traddles, on which some paroxysm does not take place. Mr. T. will not require me to depict my feelings, when I inform him that I have become accustomed to hear Mr. Micawber assert that he has sold himself to the D. Mystery and secrecy have long been his principal characteristic, have long replaced unlimited confidence. The slightest provocation, even being asked if there is anything he would prefer for dinner, causes him to express a wish for a separation. Last night, on being childishly solicited for twopence, to buy "lemon-stunners"—a local sweetmeat—he presented an oyster-knife at the twins!

I entreat Mr. Traddles to bear with me in entering into these details. Without them, Mr. T. would indeed find it difficult to form the faintest conception of my heart-rending situation.

May I now venture to confide to Mr. T. the purport of my letter? Will he now allow me to throw myself on his friendly consideration? Oh yes, for I know his heart!

The quick eye of affection is not easily blinded, when of the female sex. Mr. Micawber is going to London. Though he studiously concealed his hand, this morning before breakfast, in writing the direction-card which he attached to the little brown valise of happier days, the eagle-glance of matrimonial anxiety detected d,o,n, distinctly traced. The West-end destination of the coach is the Golden Cross. Dare I fervently implore Mr. T. to see my misguided husband, and to reason with him? Dare I ask Mr. T. to endeavour to step in between Mr. Micawber and his agonised family? Oh no, for that would be too much!

If Mr. Copperfield should yet remember one un-

known to fame, will Mr. T. take charge of my unalterable regards and similar entreaties? In any case, he will have the benevolence *to consider this communication strictly private, and on no account whatever to be alluded to, however distantly, in the presence of Mr. Micawber.* If Mr. T. should ever reply to it (which I cannot but feel to be *most* improbable), a letter addressed to M. E., Post Office, Canterbury, will be fraught with less painful consequences than any addressed immediately to one, who subscribes herself, in extreme distress, Mr. Thomas Traddles's respectful friend and suppliant,

EMMA MICAWBER

V

Mr. Micawber at the two extremes

CANTERBURY, *Friday*

MY DEAR MADAM, AND COPPERFIELD,—The fair land of promise lately looming on the horizon is again enveloped in impenetrable mists, and for ever withdrawn from the eyes of a drifting wretch whose Doom is sealed!

Another writ has been issued (in His Majesty's High Court of King's Bench at Westminster), in another cause of HEEP *v.* MICAWBER, and the defendant in that cause is the prey of the sheriff having legal jurisdiction in this bailiwick.

> "Now's the day, and now's the hour,
> See the front of battle lour,
> See approach proud EDWARD'S power—
> Chains and slavery!"

Consigned to which, and to a speedy end (for mental torture is not supportable beyond a certain point, and

that point I feel I have attained), my course is run. Bless you, bless you! Some future traveller, visiting, from motives of curiosity, not unmingled, let us hope, with sympathy, the place of confinement allotted to debtors in this city, may, and I trust will, ponder, as he traces on its walls, inscribed with a rusty nail, the obscure initials, W. M.

P.S.—I re-open this to say that our common friend, Mr. Thomas Traddles (who has not yet left us, and is looking extremely well), has paid the debt and costs, in the noble name of Miss Trotwood; and that myself and family are at the height of earthly bliss.

VI

Little George Osborne gives his mother the news of the great fight at Dr. Swishtail's

SUGARCANE HOUSE, RICHMOND, *March* 18—

DEAR MAMA,—I hope you are quite well. I should be much obliged to you to send me a cake and five shillings. There has been a fight here between Cuff & Dobbin. Cuff, you know, was the Cock of the School. They fought thirteen rounds, and Dobbin Licked. So Cuff is now Only Second Cock. The fight was about me. Cuff was licking me for breaking a bottle of milk, and Figs wouldn't stand it. We call him Figs because his father is a grocer—Figs and Rudge, Thames St., City—I think as he fought for me you ought to buy your Tea and Sugar at his father's. Cuff goes home every Saturday, but can't this, because he has 2 Black eyes. He has a white pony to come and fetch him, and a groom in livery on a

bay mare. I wish my papa would let me have a pony, and I am, your dutiful Son,

GEORGE SEDLEY OSBORNE

P.S.—Give my love to little Emmy. I am cutting her out a Coach in cardboard. Please not a seed-cake, but a plum-cake.

VII

Mr. Bennet prepares the family for Mr. Collins's first letter

"I HOPE, my dear," said Mr. Bennet to his wife, as they were at breakfast the next morning, "that you have ordered a good dinner to-day, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party."

"Who do you mean, my dear? I know of nobody that is coming I am sure unless Charlotte Lucas should happen to call in—and I hope *my* dinners are good enough for her."

"I do not believe she often sees such at home. The person of whom I speak is a gentleman and a stranger."

Mrs. Bennet's eyes sparkled.

"A gentleman and a stranger? It is Mr. Bingley, I am sure. Why, Jane, you never dropt a word of this, you sly thing! Well, I am sure I shall be extremely glad to see Mr. Bingley. But, good Lord, how unlucky, there is not a bit of fish to be got to-day. Lydia, my love, ring the bell; I must speak to Hill this moment."

"It is *not* Mr. Bingley," said her husband; "it is a person whom I never saw in the whole course of my life."

This roused a general astonishment; and he had the

pleasure of being eagerly questioned by his wife and five daughters at once.

After amusing himself some time with their curiosity, he thus explained—"About a month ago I received this letter; and about a fortnight ago I answered it, for I thought it a case of some delicacy, and requiring early attention. It is from my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, when I am dead, may turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases."

"Oh! my dear," cried his wife, "I cannot bear to hear that mentioned. Pray do not talk of that odious man. I do think it is the hardest thing in the world, that your estate should be entailed away from your own children; and I am sure, if I had been you, I should have tried to do something or other about it."

Jane and Elizabeth attempted to explain to her the nature of an entail. They had often attempted it before, but it was a subject on which Mrs. Bennet was beyond the reach of reason, and she continued to rail bitterly against the cruelty of settling an estate away from a family of five daughters, in favour of a man whom nobody cared anything about.

"It certainly is a most iniquitous affair," said Mr. Bennet, "and nothing can clear Mr. Collins from the guilt of inheriting Longbourn. But if you will listen to his letter you may perhaps be a little softened by his manner of expressing himself."

"No, that I am sure I shall not; and I think it was very impertinent of him to write to you at all, and very hypocritical. I hate such false friends. Why could not he keep on quarrelling with you, as his father did before him?"

"Why, indeed, he does seem to have had some filial scruples on that head, as you will hear.

"HUNSFORD, NEAR WESTERHAM, KENT
October 15

"'DEAR SIR,—The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honoured father always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him, I have frequently wished to heal the breach; but for some time I was kept back by my own doubts, fearing lest it might seem disrespectful to his memory for me to be on good terms with any one with whom it had always pleased him to be at variance.' —"There Mrs. Bennet."—'My mind, however, is now made up on the subject, for having received ordination at Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Hon. Lady Catherine de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence has preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavour to demean myself with grateful respect towards her Ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within the reach of my influence; and on these grounds I flatter myself that my present overtures of goodwill are highly commendable, and that the circumstance of my being next in the entail of Longbourn estate will be kindly overlooked on your side, and not lead you to reject the offered olive-branch.

"'I cannot be otherwise than concerned at being the means of injuring your amiable daughters, and beg leave to apologise for it, as well as to assure you of my readiness to make them every possible amends—but of this hereafter. If you should have no objections to receive me into your house, I propose myself the satisfaction of waiting on you and your family, Monday, Nov. 18th,

by four o'clock, and shall probably trespass on your hospitality till the Saturday se'nnight following, which I can do without any inconvenience, as Lady Catherine is far from objecting to my occasional absence on a Sunday, provided that some other clergyman is engaged to do the duty of the day.—I remain, dear Sir, with respectful compliments to your lady and daughters, your well-wisher and friend, WILLIAM COLLINS'

"At four o'clock, therefore, we may expect this peace-making gentleman," said Mr. Bennet, as he folded up the letter. "He seems to be a most conscientious and polite young man, upon my word, and I doubt not will prove a valuable acquaintance, especially if Lady Catherine should be so indulgent as to let him come to us again. There is some sense in what he says about the girls, however, and if he is disposed to make them any amends, I shall not be the person to discourage him."

"Though it is difficult," said Jane, "to guess in what way he can mean to make us the atonement he thinks our due, the wish is certainly to his credit."

Elizabeth was chiefly struck with his extraordinary deference for Lady Catherine, and his kind intention of christening, marrying, and burying his parishioners whenever it was required. "He must be an oddity, I think," said she. "I cannot make him out. There is something very pompous in his style,—and what can he mean by apologising for being next in the entail? We cannot suppose he would help it if he could. Can he be a sensible man, Sir?"

"No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him."

"In point of composition," said Mary, "his letter does not seem defective. The idea of the olive-branch perhaps is not wholly new, yet I think it is well expressed."

VIII

Mr. Collins urges Mr. Bennet to play the father

MY DEAR SIR,—I feel myself called upon, by our relationship, and my situation in life, to condole with you on the grievous affliction you are now suffering under, of which we were yesterday informed by a letter from Hertfordshire. Be assured, my dear sir, that Mrs. Collins and myself sincerely sympathise with you and all your respectable family, in your present distress, which must be of the bitterest kind, because proceeding from a cause which no time can remove. No arguments shall be wanting on my part that can alleviate so severe a misfortune—or that may comfort you, under a circumstance that must be of all others most afflicting to a parent's mind.

The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this.

And it is the more to be lamented, because there is reason to suppose, as my dear Charlotte informs me, that this licentiousness of behaviour in your daughter has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence; though, at the same time, for the consolation of yourself and Mrs. Bennet, I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such an enormity, at so early an age.

Howsoever that may be, you are grievously to be pitied; in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs.

Collins, but likewise by Lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair.

They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others; for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? And this consideration leads me moreover to reflect with augmented satisfaction, on a certain event of last November; for had it been otherwise, I must have been involved in all your sorrow and disgrace.

Let me advise you then, my dear sir, to console yourself as much as possible, to throw off your unworthy child from your affection for ever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence.—I am, dear Sir, etc.

IX

Mr. Bennet dismisses Mr. Collins

DEAR SIR,—I must trouble you once more for congratulations. Elizabeth will soon be the wife of Mr. Darcy. Console Lady Catherine as well as you can. But, if I were you, I would stand by the nephew; he has more to give.—Yours sincerely, etc.

X

Mr. Weller, senior, becomes the happy Bear of ill news

MARKIS GRANBY, DORKEN, *Wednesday*

MY DEAR SAMMLE,—I am wery sorry to have the pleasure of being a Bear of ill news your Mother in law cort cold consekens of imprudently settin too long

on the damp grass in the rain a hearin of a shepherd who warnt able to leave off till late at night owen to his havin vound his-self up vith brandy and vater and not being able to stop his-self till he got a little sober which took a many hours to do the doctor says that if she'd svallo'd varm brandy and vater artervards insted of afore she mightn't have been nó vus her veels wos immedetly greased and everythink done to set her agoin as could be inwented your farther had hopes as she vould have vorked round as usual but just as she wos a turnen the corner my boy she took the wrong road and vent down hill vith a welocity you never see and notvithstandin that the drag wos put on directly by the medikel man it wornt of no use at all for she paid the last pike at twenty minutes afore six o'clock yesterday evenin havin done the jouney wery much under the reglar time vich praps was partly owen to her haven taken in wery little luggage by the vay your father says that if you vill come and see me Sammy he vill take it as a wery great favor for I am wery lonely Samivel n b he *vill* have it spelt that vay vich I say ant right and as there is sich a many things to settle he is sure your guvner won't object of course he vill not Sammy for I knows him better so he sends his dooty in which I join and am Samivel infernally yours,

TONY VELLER

POSTSCRIPT VI

A MODEL

Mr. Rogers to Lady Dufferin

WILL you dine with me on Wednesday?

Lady Dufferin to Mr. Rogers

WON'T !?

TERMINAL NOTE

MY thanks are due, and are very gratefully given, to many owners of copyright for allowing this book to be much more representative than it could have been without them: to Miss Georgina Hogarth for the letters of Charles Dickens; and also, for other rights in that great man's work, to Mr. A. P. Watt, to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., to Col. Ward and Mr. John Murray; to Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., for the letters of Shirley Brooks; to Sir George Otto Trevelyan for the letters of Macaulay; to the Rev. Bridgeman G. F. C. W. Boughton-Leigh for the correspondence between Lady Shuckburgh and Lady Seymour; to Mr. W. L. Dodgson for the letters of Lewis Carroll; to Mr. C. L. Graves for a letter from his *Memoir of Sir George Grove*; to Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. for the letters of Thackeray, and for adding their permission to Mr. Anstey's for the citation of Dr. Grimstone's dictated masterpiece; to Messrs. Longmans & Co. for the extracts from the Memoir and Correspondence of Miss Berry; to Mr. A. G. B. Russell and Messrs. Methuen for two letters of William Blake; to Mr. Edward Arnold for two letters of Maria Edgeworth; to Mr. Alexander Carlyle and the various publishers for the letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle (Longmans & Co.), the early letters of Thomas Carlyle (Macmillan & Co.), and for

Acknowledgments

Carlyle's account of meeting Queen Victoria (John Lane); to Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for the letters of Jane Austen and Edward FitzGerald; to Mrs. Hugh Carter for Thackeray's new letter to her father-in-law; to Mr. Lloyd Osbourne for two letters of R. L. Stevenson; and to Mr. Ewing T. Irwin for T. E. Brown's description of the Jungfrau. I regret exceedingly, with Prof. Charles Eliot Norton, that the publishers of the letters of James Russell Lowell could not see their way to allow any of them to appear in this book.

The Roman letters are either from the translations in *Elegant Extracts* or in William Roberts's *History of Letter Writing*; Gray's letters are from Mr. Gosse's edition; Lamb's are from Messrs. Methuen's edition; Keats's from Mr. Buxton Forman's edition; Swift's letters, for the most part, from Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole's edition. I found the Parish Clerk's letter, on page 274, in the diary of the Rev. Julian Young, a treasury of agreeable egoism. Bob Thoms' own copy of his letter of resignation was given to me by Mr. A. J. Gaston. Sergeant Dunt's application for fishing-rights is from Mr. H. O. Nethercote's history of the Pytchley (S. Low & Co.), and George Forester's account of Tom Moody's funeral from Thormanby's *Kings of the Hunting Field* (Hutchinson). Lastly, I would say that I found Messrs. Nimmo's *British Letter-Writers* very useful.

E. V. L.

July 1907

"As life runs on the road grows strange,
With faces new,—and near the end
The milestones into headstones change:—
'Neath every one a friend."

J. R. Lowell

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